Détente

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/10546824.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Marvel Cinematic Universe, Batman (Movies - Nolan)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Molly Graham/Will Graham, James "Bucky" Barnes & Steve Rogers
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Barney, Imago the dog, Molly Graham, James "Bucky" Barnes, Steve Rogers, Francis Dolarhyde, Reba McClane, Bedelia Du Maurier
Additional Tags:	Reunion, gifting, Hannigram - Freeform, prison suit, prison jump suit, puppy, imago, Flirting, Longing, Sex, Anal Sex, Fingering, Rimming, crafty hannibal, Sneaky Hannibal, Revelations, Pining, season 3b divergent, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Will goes by 'Foster' to stay out of the limelight, mutli-universes theory, tooth fairy case talk, pining through the glass, hole hand holding, Fluff, Smut, talks of running away together, will gets his boat back, ice cream made to taste like 'Will', Hannibal's Cooking, talk of alternate realities, and alternate universes, Clones, Hydra, Batman - Freeform, Marvel - Freeform, mcu - Freeform, super heroes, Split Personalities, Trauma, PTSD, pocket universe
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Domesticity Timestamps
Stats:	Published: 2017-04-05 Updated: 2018-04-29 Words: 71,166 Chapters: 7/?

Détente

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Summary

Having left in a huff before, Will returns to BSHCI after receiving a gift of a wolf like puppy. He goes to thank Hannibal personally, and in span of the evening into early morning they finally reconcile their differences, for now.

Notes

1) This was a RolePlay that took place back in July 2015, while season 3 aired, so things went very canon divergent.
2) Given it is an RP, please keep in mind the back and forth.
3) Confused? Please see the first story in the series!
4) Please follow us on tumblr!

Chapter 1

A truck pulled up to Will's hidden retreat, a visitor was a rare thing, and branches and leaves crunched under it's tires. A delivery man stepped out with a clipboard, and smiled as the pack of dogs barked at him, and ran toward the truck, standing at a distance to guard the house from the newcomer, except for Buster, who went to sniff at the man's shoes.

Will looked over, curiously, and told Molly to stay in, he'd get this. He wandered out, and looked the man over suspiciously. "What is this?"

"Delivery for William Foster," the man said. The dogs all went quiet and sat down when Will came out, except for Buster who went to sniff the truck, curiously.

"Are ... you Mr. Foster?"

Will sighed. "Yes, that's me." He whistled at the six dogs to get back, the one having just passed recently.

"Perfect, sign just there," the man said, and handed Will the clip board with a pen, then headed to the back of the truck with Buster at his heels, smiling at him.

"Quite a feisty little guy here, I'm sure they'll get along fine," he said, and brought out a large, expensive looking animal carrier in his arms with the words "Lupo Italiano - Cuccilo" on the side and the coat of arms of the breeder beneath.

"He's the essence of small dog syndrome," Will muttered, signing his name to the paper work, and held the clip board back out for whenever the man took it.

The man set the carrier on the nearest picnic table with great care, then took the clipboard and went back to the truck. The dogs sniffed the air and they all swarmed around the carrier, sniffing at it as a dark, fuzzy face with blinking, pale eyes gazed out.

Will watched the man and then went to the carrier, hushing the dogs quietly. He went over and looked inside it at the small, dark thing with light eyes.

"Hey there pal..."

"He's a beautiful one," the man said as he carried bags and bags of what looked like frozen, vacuum-sealed meat out and piled it on the table. "I've never seen a puppy with that coloring before from any breeder. I can't imagine how much you paid for him, but he's good as gold, only had a little howl once when I got him from the plane."

"Howl?" Will asked, looking the puppy over and getting the distinct feeling that it wasn't just a dog. It wasn't a dog at all.

Hannibal.

"And he eats meat. Of course."

"Of course. This is from the breeder, the meat he's used to with a little roughage, and some minerals and vitamins mixed in. All you have to do is thaw it and put it in a bowl. I'll bring more next week," he said.

There was obviously enough there for *all* the dogs, and they went back and forth between sniffing at the frozen gourmet meat with wagging tails, and the pup in the kennel, excited for the first time in days since the passing of their pack mate.

"You're on a schedule to bring more?" Will asked, finally opening the kennel, and gently letting the pup come sniff him at his leisure.

"A delivery of this food every week," the man said, showing Will the paperwork. "Paid up front for ten years."

" *Ten* years?" Will's eyes went wide, sure that he could never repay Hannibal for this, and was *sure* that was what his friend had in mind.

"Until 2025, yes," the delivery guy said with a little smile, impressed. "Not something you see all the time. Oh, there he goes..." he laughed as the fearless pup jumped out of his carrier and into the crowd of dogs, sniffing at them, calmly, ears forward.

Will stood back, letting Imago, as he was going to name him rightfully, smell his new siblings. "D'ya know if they're good with kids?"

"I've never heard of anyone having a problem with them," the driver said, proudly. "They're used in Italy as search and rescue dogs, very strong, very brave, and so intelligent it almost can't be measured. They're said to be the best of a dog and the best of a wolf in one fuzzy package," he said, watching the pup sniff at his new siblings, then sniff at Will and look up at him.

"Good, thank you," Will said, kneeling down to pet his new puppy, with a big smile on his face.

The pup stretched up and sniffed Will's stubbly face, then looked into his eyes and climbed up into his arms, bravely, licking his neck and chin, obviously happy with him.

"Awwww," the driver said with a smile, and nodded. "It'll be nice to see how he does, I think this is gonna be a good fit. Well, see you next week, Mr. Foster!" He headed back to his truck, all the dogs crowded around Will to look up at the puppy.

"Thank you," Will said, not looking at the man, but the puppy in his arms, and nuzzled it, petting down his sleek fur. "You are going to be hard to explain..."

The puppy just licked Will again, his little tail wagging as he burrowed against his coat, and sniffed Will all over, then sneezed when he got to his aftershave.

Will laughed. "Of course you'd do that."

He picked the pup up and gathered the food into his arms, whistling for the other dogs to come, and went into the house to get everything settled.

Then he'd contact Hannibal.

Imago looked over Will's shoulder at his packmates and gave a happy wiggle, then rested his chin on Will's shoulder like a baby.

Molly opened the door, squinting. "What's that?

"A dog," Will said, setting the food in the freezer as he held the puppy like a baby, rubbing it's back gently.

"No, that's a puppy!" Molly laughed and went to look at the puppy with a big smile.

"Ohhhhhh, hi little baby. Where did you get him? He is so cute!”

"He was delivered. He'll be good for training for snow rescues and such," Will said, letting Molly see the puppy, but obviously too attached right now to let go of him.

"Awwwwww, baby!" she smiled and pet the little pup's head, then tried to kiss him, which got a tiny growl, which only made her laugh more. "Oh my god, he's so cute. You got him online? How old is he?"

"A few months. His name is Imago."

There was no room for changing that, he wouldn't allow it.

"Di Maggio!? That's so cute!" Molly squeaked, and petted Imago's paws, which prompted him to try and play with her over Will's shoulder.

"Imago," he repeated, with a sigh, testing his patients, which he seemed to have even less of since he got back the other day from seeing Hannibal.

"Iago," Molly nodded, and kept petting the puppy, then picked Buster up so that he could sniff at him. "You should have told me he was coming, I could have got a little bed all ready."

"It's fine, we'll figure it out. I wasn't expecting him... so soon," Will lied, and let the puppy lick his face and then Buster's.

Buster grunted and tried to crawl out of Molly's arms and onto Will, too.

"No, Buster, no, no .."

Will laughed and squatted down, so Buster could jump into his lap too. "It's okay, he's curious."

Buster squirmed away with a little grunt, and got into Will's lap, sniffing the puppy who sniffed back at him.

"I hope they're going to get along okay," Molly said, crouching to look at them.

"They should, we'll keep a close eyes on them. I'll need to take him to the city though, to the vet," Will said, though he was sure it wasn't necessary, it gave him an excuse to show Hannibal.

Buster settled in with the pup, starting to groom him like a mother.

"Oh, good idea, best to get him checked over. I'll go start dinner. Tuna casserole?"

Will took a deep breath and closed his eyes, and nodded. "Tuna Casserole sounds great."

Buster gave a little huff, and padded after Molly, like he had to go supervise, and Imago looked up at Will, then chewed at the edge of his hat. "C'mon, let's get you there," he said, and lifted the pup up into his arms again. "We'll be back."

He shut the front door, and walked out to his truck, a beater, but it ran better than his volvo ever did. He set the puppy inside, snuggled in a blanket, and drove, stopping at the starbucks to get two black coffees first, and then to the Frederick's B&B.

Imago was unfrightened of the loud motor, he just dug in his blanket and laid down with his head on Will's knee as he drove. When Will went into Starbucks, however, the pup protested loudly, but quieted when Will came back for him, and wagged, resuming his place against Will's knee.

Will was stopped at the door, and the guard frowned at the pup.

"I dunno if you can bring an animal in here," he muttered, looking at Imago, but Barney walked up, confidently and patted the guard on the shoulder.

"Oh, he's here, good. Therapy animal for Dr. Lecter, something Dr. Bloom is experimenting with, I meant to give you a heads up but we had that scuffle up on third," Barney said, and handed over a paper, which the guard looked at and nodded, waving Will through with the pup.

Will walked through, pup under one arm, coffees in tray in his other hand, a third one seated in there for Barney, of course.

"Thank you," Will said to Barney quietly as they walked through, Imago wiggling in his arms.

"No problem, that one's always on a little bit of a power trip," Barney said once they were out of earshot.

"If you ever have a problem, ask for me, I all but live here," the friendly, steady nurse said as he used his badge to swipe them into a stairwell.

"I imagine that's why Han-- Doctor Lecter -- likes you," Will said with a little smile, and walked through the next door when it was opened. He left the other day in an angry fury, but he couldn't seem to keep those feelings right now with a squirming puppy in his arms.

"He is actually a lot easier to get along with than most of the staff," Barney said under his breath and smiled at Imago. "Awww. Hey little guy. He's cuter than his picture," he smiled, and offered his hand, which Imago sniffed.

"He's very cuddly. Might be trouble come bed time," Will mused, probably more than he should honestly.

Barney swiped them through the second set of heavy doors. "I'd love to have a problem like that. I'm hardly home, it'd be mean to get a dog right now, but someday..."

"You could get one for here, a therapy dog to be used by everyone," Will suggested.

"That wouldn't be a *bad* idea, we'd have to be careful about who got close to him or her, but I could ask Dr. Bloom, she'd probably agree," Barney said and stopped outside of Hannibal's door, looking at Will. "He's been ... depressed. Just a heads up."

"Alana would," he said, quietly, and then looked at Barney, handing him one of the three cups of coffee. “That's my fault, actually."

Barney thanked Will with a little bow of his head, and then thought about what Will said.

"He's got nothing but time to think in here, and if he's not distracted, he ruminates. A mind that powerful turning in on itself can be it's own worst enemy. He felt bad that you left angry last time. I probably shouldn't really be saying all this, but just wanted you to know."

Will sighed, and tilted his head at Barney, making eye contact where he normally would not, but his glasses today left him a barrier. One he needed. "Hannibal has the ability to push my very last button, good or bad. We parted on stressful terms each time we seem to meet."

"Maybe that's because if you don't have an argument, you wouldn't be able to say goodbye," Barney mused. "I had a girlfriend like that....

Will couldn't argue with that, honestly, and handed Barney the coffees to hold for a second, and slipped his ring off and put it into his pocket, and then took the tray back. "Less arguments this way."

Barney nodded, and handed the coffees back, then swiped the door open. "You know best."

"Thank you," Will said, feeling so much guilt weight down in his chest, but he wasn't sure if it was because of Molly or because of Hannibal.

He slipped inside, and set the puppy down.

Imago shook himself out and padded toward the glass, curious and as brave as ever.

Hannibal looked up from his desk when he heard the door, looking a little more tired than usual, and rose gracefully to walk to the glass. "Good evening Will, and Imago," he smiled, genuinely and tapped the glass so that the puppy went to investigate his fingers.

"Hannibal," Will said, setting the coffees down for a second, and then folded his coat over the chair from last time. "He's very playful. Loves the pack already."

"He is as fearless as his description suggested," Hannibal chuckled as Imago tried to chew on his finger through the glass. "Thank you for bringing him, and the coffee..."

"He is. Buster thinks he's his mother," Will laughed, and brought the cup over to the glass, and then saw the little drawer he was allowed to hand things through.

Hannibal nodded, and stood, walking to the drawer to look at Will over it. "Buster must accept him before any of the others can, mothering him is the best scenario you can hope for," Hannibal said, knowingly.

"Very. He's been left at home though to help oversee dinner," Will sighed, and set the coffee into the drawer and gently slid it back over to Hannibal.

Hannibal looked at the cup of coffee, and picked it up when it came through to his side, touching it in the same places Will's fingers had touched it when he lifted it.

"I have the feeling Buster may have his paws full."

"Tuna casserole is his favorite night," Will muttered, knowing he would get a look from Hannibal over that one. "I got the darker roast, not the house roast. I know you don't prefer the house roast."

"That is because I do not prefer coffee-flavored water," Hannibal said, and took a sip, then nodded his thanks. "I thought you did not eat tuna casserole?"

Will wandered back to the seat and took his own coffee in hand and sat down, just as he had the last time he was here. "We don't eat it *often* ."

Imago padded his way over to Will and wiggled before he jumped up into his lap, then tried to get his coffee.

"Ah, I must have misunderstood, in that case," Hannibal said, and sat down with a heavy smirk on his full lips.

"She won't be expecting me home, it takes hours to get here," Will said, shaking his head, implying that he had nowhere to be right now, but here. On his own terms.

He pet Imago, and sipped his coffee, carefully, keeping it from him. Imago climbed up to Will's chest to be held like a baby, head on Will's shoulder with a heavy sigh.

"You aren't here on business?" Hannibal asked, with a raised eyebrow

Will pet the pup, and snuggled his face into his little snout. "No, Jack hasn't gotten back to me yet. I'm here on my own."

Hannibal's expression softened, and he sat down after moving his chair closer, watching Will snuggle the puppy, melting inside a little. "I spoke with Alana, she agreed that you could visit at any hour of the day, or night."

Will had a hand deep in the puppy's fur, smiling like it was something he was used to doing lately. "Alana did? I thought she'd be the last person who'd want me around you."

"She owes me a debt," Hannibal said, with the sort of smile that implied there was much Will didn't know. "Regardless, you are welcome, any time, as is Imago."

"Me and our surrogate *puppy* ?" Will said, chin lifted up a little as Imago licked him.

Hannibal felt himself smile as he watched Imago, and thought privately that the puppy was much more affectionate toward Will than Abigail was. An improvement. "I will ask if he can have his own security badge.

Will let out a heartier laugh at that, and set his coffee down to give the puppy his attention. "I don't know that he can fit through the slot over there..."

"I won't say I didn't consider it, I wish I could hold him," Hannibal sighed, and sipped his coffee. "I picked him out for his courage, and his coloring, his eyes reminded me of yours."

Will cleared his throat at that, and brought the puppy closer to Hannibal's wall. "Maybe I can talk Alana into actual therapy time for you with him, away from the room."

"Perhaps," Hannibal said quietly, and curled his fingers through the hole in the glass, looking at Imago, then Will, hopefully.

Will got Imago close enough that his fur ruffled against Hannibal's long fingers. "He's very soft."

Hannibal curled his fingers in Imago's fur with a warm light in his eyes, petting the back of his head, which made the puppy turn, and lick at Hannibal's fingers, then tried to chew on them. Hannibal smiled at that, charmed. "He is perfect."

"He needs a little training, but he'll do," Will said, affectionately, gazing at Hannibal as he enjoyed the feel of the fur, and bites.

"He has his puppy teeth, still," Hannibal said, and looked back at Will, close up. "Very sharp."

Imago turned and licked Will's face, and then Hannibal's hand again, and Will got a little closer so the puppy didn't have to keep going back and forth. "Needs 'em for all that meat."

"You've left the after shave off," Hannibal noted, still petting Imago whenever the puppy turned toward his hand, his fur was silky, and exquisitely soft.

"Someone's allergic," Will said, nodding to the dog as he rested his head, sideways, on the wall, watching Imago relish in the attention of both men.

Hannibal chuckled, and petted Imago's ear, gently, then gave him a little scratch behind it. "If I had a treat for him, he would certainly get one for that."

He looked at Will's hand, devoid of the ring, but his skin carried the imprint.

"I'm sure he'll get plenty at home, and be fat the next time you see him," Will murmured, petting Imago with his left hand, right shoulder against the glass, devoid of any fear that Hannibal could grasp him from here.

They petted the puppy at the same time, and their fingers brushed for a moment through Imago's fur. Hannibal held the contact for a second, and closed his eyes

Their touches had never gone past friendly, or intimate. They never delved into the romance part of it, or the sexual. It had always been touch and go, with too many things in the way to consider it. Maybe that last night Will saw Hannibal in Wolf Trap, maybe then it might have, but he was determined to never find out what could have been.

The charge between them was electric as their fingers brushed, and Will brought his glasses covered eyes to meet Hannibal's.

Hannibal had considered it, many, many times. He was obsessed with Will on every level, and had been since the moment they met, even when he tried to resist Will's pull. "Lost your ring?"

"It's an anchor for argument. I took it off," Will said, quietly, now that they were sitting close, or as close as they could be.

"Your marriage is cause for my upset," Hannibal said, softly. "The ring itself without the marriage is meaningless. Nevertheless, I appreciate the attempt," he said, a little of the depression Barney spoke of showing in his eyes.

Will scooted closer, pup in his lap for now, and looked at Hannibal, knowing he could not fix this for him, he couldn't just change the rules of his life, turn it upside down, to please him. "Within reason, what can I do?"

"Is divorce within reason?" Hannibal asked, softly, more open than he had been before.

"And then what, Hannibal?" Will asked, quite seriously. "Do I come here often for visits, and talk as we are now?"

"I will remain in here as long as you require me to remain here, as long as you need to feel safe around me again," Hannibal said, making it clear that he had put *himself* behind glass, guessing it was the only way Will would actually begin to trust him again.

Will held his breath, obviously thinking it over. He would not and could not just up and leave his life, not the dogs, not Molly, not Wally… "I'd like to get your trust first."

"My trust?" Hannibal asked, eyes lifting to WIll's, slowly, able to feel his heart beating differently since last night, more sluggishly, like it was dragging itself along

"We both need it. Each other's trust. It's what we're lacking, it's what makes a solid foundation to any relationship," Will offered, reaching his fingers inside the hole just a little.

Hannibal looked at Will's fingers, unable to remember when Will *offered* his touch before. He hesitated, and raised his own hand to the glass, resting his fingers against Will's, eyes closed as he took a deep breath and let it out, slowly. "I agree."

Will was not promising anything. He owed it to them both to figure this out, to what it was, if there was anything. He needed Hannibal, for more than just the case. He didn't move his hand, he just watched Hannibal carefully, forehead pressed to the glass. Their connection had been so strong once, he could almost feel their hearts beating between their palms.

Hannibal looked up and saw Will, then leaned his forehead against the glass the same way, his eyes closing again. They looked like perfect mirrors of each other, bent toward one another in grief, linked at the fingers through the small hole.

Hannibal curled his finger around one of Will's, holding him there, like an admission that he needed his presence, more than he could manage to tell him with words.

Years of resenting Hannibal and trying to get him out of his head, just to come back to this. Will found he didn't care right now, he was feeling more and more himself, more the person he used to be, who could catch people like the Tooth Fairy.

He felt known. He didn't have to hide around Hannibal.

They'd get there, the trust. From there, then he'd figure it out.

"Your hands are ice cold," Will murmured, trying to grasp them to keep them warm.

"My blood is a little thin," Hannibal admitted, and looked up at Will, touched that he noticed the difference, and let Will touch his hands as much as he wanted to.

Will's brows furrowed with concern, and he looked over at his jacket. "I have gloves."

"Would they fit? Your hands are so much smaller," Hannibal said, with a little smile.

Will held his other hand up to the glass, to measure against Hannibal's. "Probably not..."

Hannibal did the same, smiling at how far over Will's fingers his own reached, gazing at him through the glass at the same time, almost dizzy with how much this moment felt like a dream. "But thank you, for the thought."

"Your coffee then will help, and I'll bring you some gloves tomorrow," Will promised, twisting his hand into the hole, the best he could, grasping Hannibal's cold fingers. "Your blood is thin. What's wrong?"

Hannibal took Will's hand, glad Will's smaller hands could fit through the hole like that. He held Will's hand with his own, unused to Will's skin being warmer than his own. "A minor cardiac abnormality that will correct itself in a matter of weeks."

It was easy to fall back into rhythms like this, and Will laced their fingers together the best he could, forgetting about everything else. "Hannibal..."

Hannibal laced his fingers with Will's, never having done that before, and gazed at their hands together before he spoke. "The Japanese term the condition Takotsubo. A sudden emotional stress can, in some cases, snap one of the heart strings in the left ventricle, which causes the bottom left side of the heart to balloon out and fill with blood. It usually corrects itself harmlessly, in patients who are not elderly, but as a precaution I requested that Barney give me blood thinners for the next week,"

That was on Will, too. He knew that, and squeezed Hannibal's hand, and Imago licked his chin, as if able to sense his duress. "You're going to be fine?"

"Of course," Hannibal said, confidently, and held Will's hand a little tighter, treasuring the worry in his eyes, even while he tried to dispel it. "Are you implying I am elderly?"

"No. Just worried." Will was honest about it. He had no reason not to be honest with Hannibal.

"In most cases of patients under sixty, the myocardium eventually compensates for the condition, and the chordae tendonae heals itself," Hannibal said, with reassuring authority, and squeezed Will's hand. "There is no need to worry. I have survived the wrath of Jack Crawford twice, a broken heart string is a minor setback, and Barney is very knowledgeable."

"I broke your heart, twice," Will sighed, slumping against the glass, wishing for once he was close to Hannibal. To feel the rise and fall of his chest under his hand.

Hannibal watched Will slump, and risked kissing his knuckles, very lightly, then leaned toward him, breathing with Will, slowly. "You may have cracked it, but it has yet to shatter completely."

Will flushed up to his ears, and turned his head away to hide it. "Let's work on that." He really needed to talk to Alana about allowing Hannibal out for therapy dog visits.

Hannibal nodded, and watched Will's blush with an adoring gaze, glad he took the small risk ... and wished he could take more of a risk than that. "Yes, let's."

Will sighed. He was so, so screwed. Molly was unsuspecting, and innocent, and she didn't deserve this after her first husband died. He didn't know what to do. Shackled between two people.One he wanted to be with more, one that was normal.

"Have that Gerbil yet?"

Hannibal chuckled and shook his head, looking at Will through the glass. "I thought it best I reconsidered my impulses, in that matter," he said, and looked at Imago. "I found a dog, instead, and gave him the best possible home."

Will held the dog, wondering what would happen to him or the others if he /did/ manage to run away with Hannibal someday… "I love him, he's perfect..."

Hannibal knew now that if he and Will ever did run off together, the dogs would come. His mind had already considered what they might need for that, and it was crackling again with possibility, his eyes brighter, more honey in them now than darkness. "I would never want to part you."

"I love all of them..." Will looked at Hannibal, knowingly, but didn't say it, he didn't *have* to. Hannibal knew him.

"I know. Being away from them was like being away from the best part of yourself," Hannibal said, understanding now as he held Will's hand. "Tearing a wolf from his pack is cruel."

"I couldn't leave them." Will loved Molly, unconditionally, but she was... forgettable. He could leave her. No, she would leave him he could feel that happening.

"I would never make you do that," Hannibal promised. He knew Will enough, inside and out, to know he meant his dogs, not Molly.

The dogs had always been a first priority. Always. Even at a crime scene, he asked about dogs first.

"No?" Will asked. Hannibal once asked him to, the first time.

"No, not now. I see that leaving them behind is like leaving a part of yourself behind, you could never make a new life without them," Hannibal said.

Will felt like he was seeing someone completely new here, like Hannibal had years to think over his actions, to try and take them back, to revise time… It didn't make up for everything he had done, of course, he had the scars to prove that. And yet, his fingers feigned to curl a little tighter, the best he could, through the hole, around Hannibal's. "Thank you."

Hannibal felt it, and did the same back. Three years to sit and consider, to build scenarios in his mind to see where he had gone wrong had taught him a lot. "Should we ever make it away together, a place will be made for them with us."

The thought was daunting, and yet made his chest feel light. It would be timing, and after he caught this killer, because that was priority, that's what he was up for. "Not so subtle."

"Perhaps the time for subtlety has passed," Hannibal said, thoughtfully, as he looked into Will's eyes, admiring the flecks of gold in the green and blue there. "And it is time to be plain with each other."

"Run off to some other country, into the mountains with our many dogs, and food deliveries for them, and enjoy being snowed in?" Will asked, just one scenario, though he had a feeling Hannibal preferred the warmth.

"Argentina is beautiful, at any time of year," Hannibal smiled, obviously having given it thought. "And I may already own a sprawling patch of land near the mountains there. Patagonia is not far, if ever you and the dogs crave snow, and the fishing is beyond compare."

"You have really thought of nothing else but where we would live?" Will asked, incredulously, but amused. Imago had fallen asleep in his lap, little puppy breaths against his thigh.

"I have thought, often, of how I would make things right between us," Hannibal murmured, and his own eyes went honey-colored when Will looked amused. "My mind has constructed several possible lives that I believe would make *both* of us happy. You require space, and your dogs, good fishing and quiet away from the city. I require you."

"Just me?" Will asked, not sure he believed that, because not too long ago, Hannibal wanted everything, *and* Will. The reading off of Hannibal was a strange one, he could sense his finality in it, his truths, without the shade of a lie to cover it. He had no reason for it now.

"A major city within a day's travel would be most convenient," Hannibal said."I do have my tastes to consider, but," He looked back up at Will. "But you are essential."

The glass between them made it ever hard for Will to trust, however, wanting to be holding Hannibal's hand without strain, to feel him being embraced for once without the dark edge of something dangerous behind Hannibal's motions looming just behind them.

He wanted sincerity, and to feel it physically.

"Something to consider for the future then."

Hannibal spent most of his time outside of his mind palace, which was now surrounded by deep snow. In it, he carried Will, around and around the palace, cherishing his weight and the simple contact of having him in his arms, against his chest. "For the future," Hannibal nodded, and stroked his thumb along the side of Will's hand.

Will let out a shaky breath, aware of what he was insisting to promise here, but he had time, he had things to settle first, to take care of. Hannibal would understand that.

Plus, his confinement here would be an obstacle they had to get through at some point too

"Argentina also has a long reputation of being notoriously difficult for American law enforcement to work with," Hannibal said, with a hint of a smirk.

"Live the rest of our lives on the edge of our seats," Will huffed a laugh through his mouth, which made Imago twitch, little paws against the glass as he dreamed.

"Hardly, once we are there, we'd be able to relax," Hannibal assured Will, and looked down at Imago with a smile

Thinking about it, Will had a feeling Molly would want to keep some of the dogs, he'd likely just take Buster and Winston, and little Imago here. Easier. They could rebuild their family.

God, was he a horrible person for even considering this?

The light in Hannibal's eyes directly told him, no he wasn't.

"Then I guess that's where we'd go."

Hannibal looked back up at Will, and rested his forehead against the glass again, the light catching the silver in his hair. "It is one of several possible places in the world, but I think it would be the best for all of us."

Will rested his right up against Hannibal's, almost able to feel his heat there, and closed his eyes, comfortable and complete feeling, despite the pane of glass between them. This was the feeling he always hated having, like he didn't' deserve it, and really didn't deserve it with Hannibal. "It sounds perfect.

"You want to catch this killer first, though, don't you?" Hannibal asked, knowingly, still holding Will's fingers through the hole.

"Yes. I... don't want more families to die because I didn't take action," Will sighed, swallowing.

"That is a burden Jack has placed on you," Hannibal sighed. "He has made it your responsibility to save these people, not his. I have always resented that."

"It would dig at me knowing I could have done something and didn't. He strikes on Full Moons, I just need to get into his head before then," Will said, quietly, just between them.

"I'm certain that between the two of us, we will manage nicely," Hannibal said, and hoped Will getting closer to him wasn't only for the purposes of motivating him to help catch the killer.

If it was, he supposed he would risk looking the fool. Will was worth the risk.

"What do you know about him?

"Not a lot. thirties, male. Snaggly teeth if the imprint is right. Likes to touch his victims with his bare hand, we found talcum powder... I know details, I don't know *why* ..." Will was having a lot of issues getting into that mindspace again, after so many years of /not/ thinking that way, of not having to.

"Whom does he target? Most killers have a discernable pattern," Hannibal said, guiding Will through it, slowly.

"Families," Will sighed, though he was aware that Hannibal knew this already, and canted his head at time.

"What kind of families? Broken? Large? Troubled? Poor?" Hannibal asked, like a teacher guiding a student through a tough problem.

"I wasn't given any personal background on them... they seemed normal, two kids, two parents..."

"Nuclear families, then, I'm going to guess from middle-class backgrounds," Hannibal murmured. "He touches them with his bare hands? All of them?"

"The wife," Will said. "He moves them, but only her he touched without his glove."

Hannibal considered it, looking into the distance while he pondered the problem. "Wherever this killer came from, it was not a stable, loving home. He kills them, then touches the lady of the house because he feels this is the family he should have, but does not. He grew up without unity, without stability and love. He covets the position of the father, to be respected and loved ... something he has never had, and feels he cannot have. This is how he creates his perfect life, this is the only way he feels he *can* have that life."

"Broken home. Possibly foster systems..." Will sighed, deeply, and hands still twined with Hannibal's, grounding himself to the here. "He leaves glass shard in their eyes and mouths."

"He wishes them to look alive, the glass will reflect light and motion. He wishes for a living family, not a dead one. From where does he obtain the glass, Will?"

"He breaks the mirrors. They found prints, but they don't match anyone, he's not in the system." It was getting harder by the thought of it to catch this guy, and he could grow more dangerous.

"He breaks mirrors, not windows, not drinking glasses, or plates. What do you make of that choice? Why mirrors, Will?" Hannibal asked, already certain of the answer, but Will had to do this, not him.

"He... doesn't want to see himself, but he does want to see himself in their eyes, as ah... transformation." But to what.

Hannibal nodded, glad to see Will's instincts coming back like a plant brought back from a drought. "Into what? A being of great power, worthy of all he has been denied in his ordinary life. We may surmise, in that case, that he is not a powerful man when he passes unseen under the eyes of those who know him. He needs power, because he feels it's lack, acutely. Others might describe him as meek, or shy. Where do you think this shy boy selects his victims from, Will?"

Will’s jaw worked, nervously, trying to piece it all, and it was much harder after so long of never doing this, sworn he never would either. His eyes closed, trying to remember the crime scene, how he knew to get into the house, if there were alarms or not, and where...

"He'd... have intimate knowledge of the house, not necessarily the family. Pictures. Footage..." he grasping, but something clicked.

"He envies them from afar, he can see into the perfection of their lives, their happiest moments," Hannibal said with a soft squeeze of his fingers laced with Will's, encouraging him to make the connections.

Will felt warmth seep from himself into Hannibal's cold hands, dreaded with worry for a second, but also felt his need for Will to understand. "A film developing company is ideal. Pictures, movies, he could see them without anyone knowing he'd seen at all.

Hannibal nodded, eyes locking with Will's as he arrived at his conclusion. "He would not see the boredom and resentment so often woven into domestic life, photos and film would parade the best and happiest moments of 'normal' life before his eyes, igniting a jealous rage," Hannibal sighed, heavily. "At the moment, I suppose I can understand his perspective."

Will opened his eyes again and looked at Hannibal, well aware that there was something even more dangerous stirring under there. "He's... obsessed with you. Idolizes you. He'll try to contact you."

"Then we must allow him," Hannibal said, calmly. "Contact with our shy boy will only allow me to understand him further."

Will looked very nervous, like things were going to start unraveling. There was, even, a pang of jealousy there that he swallowed down, not making the comment he intended. "Yeah, it could work for us."

Hannibal squeezed Will's fingers again, and stroked his thumb over Will's knuckles. "I am quite safe in here."

"You could handle yourself anyway," Will said, trying to brave the front that was putting off his distress about this. "You find him interesting don't you?"

Hannibal tilted his head a little, looking at Will with curiosity. "As much as I find the subject of any of our investigations interesting, yes."

Will chewed the inside of his lip, mind else where for a moment, likely in a state of fantasy, what Hannibal would do if he met this man, where would that intrigue take him?

The same intrigue he had with Will?

Hannibal arched one eyebrow, amused.

"Do not fret, Will, I am unlikely to marry him," Hannibal said with a sardonic twist to his lips.

Will's hand slipped back a little, but still close, and Will gave Hannibal a scowl. He had no right to have jealousy when he was still married, he knew that, but it still stood to reason that Hannibal could grow to be obsessed with someone else, to love someone else...

Then where would Will be if that happened and he left his family?

"Unlikely." Hannibal curled his fingers around Will's again, and Hannibal's eyes sparkled with mischief. "Extremely unlikely."

Will would likely feel better about it if he could just feel Hannibal's sincerity against him, not just a touch of his fingers. "That leads to assumption that there's a small percentage of a chance, Hannibal. Keeping your options open?"

Hannibal chuckled, and pulled Will's hand closer, holding his gaze as he planted another kiss to his knuckles, very softly, then straightened again. "Simply inviting you to understand my position."

"So saving a side of crazy just in case I don't come through again?" Will raised his brows, fingers curled as Hannibal did that.

"No one could *ever* replace your crazy, Will," Hannibal murmured to the profiler, through the glass, undeniably fond.

"I think you'll find my level of crazy is just a simmer, if not a few bubbles in the bottom of a pot of water these days," Will said, sighing.

"I prefer to think of it as a fine wine that is maturing and refining itself, locked away in a dark cellar, saved for a special occasion, and someone able to appreciate it." Will knew being here was a terrible idea, that He'd go home and feel so much guilt that he wouldn't even be able to look at his wife. It wasn't like they got intimate often anyway.

Physically or mentally.

Will felt oddly more satisfied from his talks with Hannibal like this, than he ever did after sex with Molly, or even with their talks, which there were few. "You want to drink from my wine..." he said, darkly.

"I would savour it," Hannibal purred, looking into Will's eyes.

Will let out a shaky breath, gazing at Hannibal in ways he never gazed at another soul. There was understanding there, completely, from both sides. Hannibal would never judge his darkness, he'd accept it easier than Will would himself.

He leaned his head against the glass again, shifting the sleeping pup in his lap. "I wonder where we'd be if I had just let you do that to begin with?"

Hannibal gazed at Will up close, and touched his fingers against the line of his face through it. "Somewhere decidedly more pleasant for both of us."

Will let go of breath, and slid his hand through the hole, big enough that he could, and grasped Hannibal's tightly, warming it."Someday."

"Yes, someday," Hannibal agreed, almost afraid to actually hope that one day, they could be together, the way he knew they should be. "I'm relieved you've come to see me."

"You didn't think I'd really stay away did you?" Will asked, incredulously.

"You had for three years," Hannibal said, and ran his thumb over the bones of Will's wrist, slowly. "I was beginning to worry."

"I stayed away because I knew if I saw you, I'd become addicted again," Will explained, spreading his fingers out as Hannibal touched his hand. Maybe it was a good thing they had this glass between them.

Hannibal traced his fingertips over the contours of Will's hand, like he was seeing it for the first time, memorizing everything about his fingers and palm, then held it in his own as much as he could, again. "And have you?"

Will sighed again, and looked at Hannibal, a smile that seemed more like grimace to himself for admitted something like this. "Yes. It's very hard to not be around the person that knows you best."

"My thoughts precisely," Hannibal said, softly, staring at Will as he said so. "The world seems very dull without you."

"You *are* in a prison cell," Will nodded, a touch of his usual sass there, prompting he'd never gone very far.

"And you are not, you can come back, any time," Hannibal said, with a hard swallow, not letting go of Will's hand as they spoke.

"Between leads on the case, I will do my best," Will promised, sure that he'd need to come back to see Hannibal anyway.

"As it always was, my door is open to you, at all hours," Hannibal said, his heart beating a little harder, childishly afraid Will was going to leave.

"I appreciate that." Will wasn't if he was going home, he hated the ride to and from, and it was going to be late soon. He might just stay in town, get a hotel.

Hannibal adjusted the way he held Will's hand, lacing their fingers again with a little smile."I'm certain Barney would be happy to bring a couch in for you."

"You think Alana is going to let me *stay* ?" Will asked, with a genuine smile that lit up his eyes, happily.

"I think she would understand," Hannibal said, his eyes lighting up a little in return, like they fed off of each other. "There is a rather comfortable looking couch against the wall, there. I can pass you my blanket through the transfer box."

Will squeezed Hannibal's hand, and set the puppy by the glass, still asleep, and then got up to move the couch over, slowly.

Hannibal curled his long fingers around the opening of the hole, and watched Will as he walked to his own simple bed and took the soft blanket off of it, folding it before he passed it through to Will's side. He looked forward to the fabric smelling like Will when he gave it back.

Will pushed it, and set his empty coffee into the garbage, and then set the puppy up on the sofa, too, and took the blanket with a smile, tugging it through the hole. "Close enough?"

"For now, yes," Hannibal said with a grateful look in his eyes, and pulled his bed over to the glass, so that he could stay close to Will for the rest of the evening. "Molly will not wonder where you are?"

"I'll message her," Will said, quietly, and got his phone out, taking his glasses off to sit down by the glass wall, and then sent her a text.

Hannibal watched Will, curiously, sitting on the edge of his narrow bed as he watched the light of Will's message to his wife dance in his eyes.

The message back was for him to be safe, and she would talk to him later.

"There." Will set the phone down with his glasses, and ran a hand through his curls.

Hannibal watched Will, able to see twin forces of guilt and relief in his movements. "I suspect you did not tell her you were spending the evening at an institute for the criminally insane..."

"No. I didn't exactly tell her I was coming here either. I told her I was taking Imago to the vet. She loves him, but she keeps calling him the wrong name," Will sighed, rolling his eyes as he rubbed his hands over his face.

Hannibal smirked a little at that. "What does she call him?" he asked, watching Will chafe a little at his wife's clumsy treatment of his puppy's name, a word that had deep meaning to Will.

"Di Maggio," Will groaned, shaking his head and petting the pup's belly as he slept, kicking his little feet in the air.

Hannibal rolled his eyes and smirked a little. "A baseball player. How wholesome."

"Her late husband was a ball player," Will mentioned, wincing at that, realizing now that she was likely not over that, but who would be.

"Late husband?" Hannibal asked, with an arch of his eyebrow. "You really did take in another stray. You felt *sorry* for her."

"I see it more as *she* took in stray, not me," Will sighed, shrugging. "He died from cancer."

"How long ago?" Hannibal asked, braving the conversation, even though part of him longed to hit the glass until it splintered.

"About three or four years ago," he said, not sure of the dates, he didn't think about it, and they didn't talk about it.

"You are aware, of course, that you will always be second to her? Nothing makes a saint out of an imperfect person quite like death does," Hannibal said, frankly.

"I am aware," Will said, quietly, hands folded in front of him as he leaned forward on the couch. "But, she's nothing but that to me, so..."

Hannibal looked at Will, with a little surprise in his expression. No one ever surprised him, not the way Will could. "Second?"

"She doesn't read me the way you do. She doesn't understand. I'm... not like other people. I'm not other people. I can play the part pretty well, but..."

"But it is even more a role you play than when you step into the bloodied chaos of a crime scene," Hannibal said, finishing Will's thought. "So you agreed to marry her, knowing you were both effectively settling for one another?""I... didn't want to be alone." It was hard to admit, but when he met Molly, he knew he could make a place with her and things would be... domestic.

"Being alone did not bother you before," Hannibal said, softly. "What changed for you, Will?"

"Do you like being alone in here, Hannibal? With your thoughts, without someone to... bounce ideas off?"

Hannibal considered it as he looked at Will. "I was quite content, with the exception of speaking with you," he said, softly and honestly.

"You'd live here without talking to Barney? Or Alana, Frederick?" Will asked, pointedly. "I had no one after you went to jail. Jack tried, they all tired, but no one understood. I needed a fresh... start. Molly was as fresh as it got."

"You chose a wife the way most would choose day old bread," Hannibal sighed, looking at Will with dismay.

"She made me feel normal.” Will looked down at his clasped hands, wondering if it was too bold to reach for Hannibal again, already feeling *cold* without touching him.

"And ... how do I make you feel?" Hannibal asked, after a moment's silence.

"Needed. Whole." Will took a deep breath, looking at Hannibal. "Complete."

Hannibal traced his fingertips against the glass again, and then offered his hand through the hole again. "You are all of those things, Will."

Will was not a very cuddly person, but he'd never had someone to cuddle with either. Molly was soft, and when she came for affection, he gave easily, but sometimes he needed it, but didn't ask for it.

Will reached out and took Hannibal's hand. "I wish I felt it."

"What do you feel?" Hannibal asked, as their palms slid together, sending small, soft electric sparks up the length of Hannibal's spine

Will relaxed at the touch, smiling even a little. "Sated. Content. Right now."

"Adored?" Hannibal asked, his voice making the word warm and soft.

"Adored," Will repeated, squeezing Hannibal's hand.

"Love without understanding is shallow at best, patronizing and fraudulent at worst," Hannibal said, his voice soft. "Understanding, without love is little more than a clinical dissection. The experience of being adored is only complete when both understanding and love are present."

Will smiled at that, honestly. "See, you... understand. You know."

"I see you, just as you see me. Love is far from blind," Hannibal said, solemnly. "Infatuation is blind, more projection than reality but /love/ ... love is seeing everything, every shadow, every scar, and not only accepting it, but /yearning/ for it when the beloved is absent."

"You would know " Will said, shaking his head a little.

"I would know from which end of the exchange?" Hannibal asked, with an arch of his eyebrow. "The lover, or the beloved?"

"You've been both, haven't you?" Will implored, sitting back on the couch, and kicked off his boots, placing them to the side.

Hannibal let go of Will's hand to let him do that, and smiled a little at his answer. "Perhaps. A man once sailed across the world to see me, or to stab me, I'm not certain..."

Will looked up at Hannibal and set his boots aside, and then curled the pup in the blanket, for now. "I think we've both played the parts equally."

"Perhaps," Hannibal said, and watched Will wrap the puppy in the blanket. "You are notoriously difficult to read at times."

"With empathy comes the ability to to hide," Will said, with a little smile. It was something he had learned to do a long time ago. He could hide under other people's feelings.

"I am not an easy man to fool," Hannibal said, almost like a tribute, as sad as it made him to think about.

"No, you aren't." But, that was what Will loved about Hannibal, he was complex.

"Yet you've done it, twice," Hannibal said, softly, and ruefully.

"Because I know you. I know how to get under your skin. Just as you do me." Will breathed in deeply, knees touching the glass in front of him.

Hannibal sat the same way, with a sigh. "It is a leap of faith to assume that you are not doing so again," he said, holding Will's gaze, steadily.

"Do you think I am?" Will asked, head cocked to the side a little, curls around his face dropping to highlight the scar over his forehead.

"To be truthful, I cannot be sure. I can only choose to believe you," Hannibal admitted, in a rare moment of humility.

"Then believe me." Will, once more, offered his hand through the hole, palm up.

Hannibal looked at the offered hand, with the feeling that Will Graham was going to be the death of him, and his undoing, then took Will's hand into his own. "When it comes to you, I am more fond than wise."

"Were we both wise, we wouldn't be here." Will shrugged, and slipped his fingers through Hannibal's larger ones, sighing as the sparks made his veins hum below his skin.

"Truer words have never been spoken," Hannibal murmured, and looked into Will's eyes, watching his pupils flare wide in the sea of blue and green.

Will wanted badly to have that wall between them taken down, to feel Hannibal's skin under his hands, to see if it felt as it did right now all over. "Two fools..."

Hannibal smiled a little, and caressed Will's hand with his thumb. "Two fools separated by a wall of glass. It sounds like a riddle."

"I guess we'll need to solve this one, too." Will smiled, letting his calloused palm rub against Hannibal's smooth one.

"It may take us a very long time, decades ..." Hannibal said, fondly, and softly. "Are you certain you are up to the challenge?"

"So long as I have my dogs," Will grinned, just as fond. He hoped to God there were no recording devices in here like there were when he was locked up.

"I will ensure that you are not separated from them," Hannibal reassured Will. Alana ran things now, thankfully, and Barney assured him there was no surveillance.

He looked at Imago with a little smile in his eyes. "I intended the blanket for you, but he's enjoying it."

Will chuckled. "Yeah, he's loving it, hate to take it from him."

Hannibal looked at Imago, who was snoring in the soft blanket, then looked at Will, and curled their fingers together, enjoying Will's presence the way Imago enjoyed the blanket. "I'm sure you can share later on."

"I'm sure it doesn't get too cold in here," Will said, with a smile, wishing he could curl up with Hannibal like they had their last night together after Mason's farm.

"It is usually temperate," Hannibal said, wishing the same thing. "Do you recall anything about your recovery once I brought you home?"

"Some of it," he said, shrugging one shoulder. "It was foggy."

"I took care of you for thirteen days. You were in and out of awareness, and heavily medicated. Strangely enough, I count it as one of the happiest periods of my life."

"It took them two weeks to find you?" Will was awestruck at that, he had no idea.

"I considered taking you with me before they came, running with you somewhere we could hide, but after your injuries, and with the infection that had begun to set in, it was not an option," Hannibal said. "I was also surprised at the lazy pace of the FBI. They did not come until I had called them."

"You called them?" Will felt an ache in his chest start to bloom. "I'm.sure Alana threw them off the trail for a while."

Hannibal nodded. "I called them after you asked me to leave, and waited in the woods."

"I still can't believe you did that." Will shook his head. He had meant every word then, and even meant them now, but that feeling disintegrated over time. Granted, it was what he had expected of Hannibal, but never did he think it would work.

Hannibal looked at Will's eyes, holding his shocked gaze with his own calm one. "Why not?"

"Because it was... it's your life. You put yourself in here. Just to spite me after what I said to you," Will explained, but he didn't take his hand back. He liked it In Hannibal's.

"I can appreciate how you may have seen my choice as spiteful," Hannibal said, calmly. "However, after leaving the house, and considering every one of my options, I was confronted with the fact that I was not willing to take flight. I'd rather be near you, even in a

cage," Hannibal said, very seriously. "And when you decided that you needed to see me again, you would know where to find me. You would know what I had been doing, you would never have to wonder."

"How did you manage three years without me?" Will asked, sarcastically, voice dripping with it.

"I didn't," Hannibal said, and moved to pull a folio of drawings from his bookshelf.

He passed them though to Will.

All of them, every single one, were drawings of Will, from memory.

Will took them carefully through the slot, and looked them over with a sad smile, a flush on the tips of his covered ears. "So from wanting to eat me, to drawing me."

Hannibal admired Will's blush, and held his hands behind his own back, as he watched Will look through the sketches. "Both impulses stemmed from a need to keep you with me."

"They wonderful. I'm... flattered," Will said, skimming over them, touching the paper. He'd really put a dent in Hannibal, and he almost felt undeserving.

"I managed one a day, those are my favorites," Hannibal said with a soft look in his eyes, watching as Will saw himself the way Hannibal truly saw him in his mind's eye.

"You praise me in ways I am undeserving of," Will said, quietly, shaking his head.

"I disagree, this is how I see you," Hannibal said, watching Will come to a sketch of him sleeping, bandaged up and bruised, but still hauntingly beautiful.

"The last time you saw me," Will said, quiet and reserved, the swell thicker in his lungs now.

"The last time I saw you. I drew that in Wolftrap, while you slept. Alana confiscated my other notes, the FBI was trying to decipher them for some time, but my sketch of you, I was allowed to keep, thankfully."

It was Hannibal's last piece of art as a free man.

"Did you sleep with me?" Will asked, wondering if that memory was real or if he dreamed snuggled up to Hannibal.

"I slept beside you," Hannibal said, softly. "I had no heart monitor, so I rested my palm over your heart, able to feel it beat."

Will nodded,letting out the breath he had held. "Thought so. I dream about that a lot."

"You did not seem to protest," Hannibal said, softly. "Dreams, or nightmares?"

"Dreams; don't have many nightmares anymore," Will said, quiet, and placed the sketches back into the hole.

"I'm glad to hear it," Hannibal said, with sincerity, and put the sketches of Will back in their place on the shelf, up high, safe from someone who might go rifling through Hannibal's books. "I assume you haven't done any work for Jack in the interim since I last saw you?"

"No, I haven't," Will said, moving so that his shoulder was to the glass wall as he sat on the edge of the couch. "Can't say I'll stay nightmare free for long."

Hannibal sat down again, near Will, almost able to feel the gentle warmth of his skin through the thick glass. "Have you considered telling Jack to find someone else?

"I tried. He even got Molly in on it, showed her pictures of the families, and then she told me to do it or I'd regret it..." Will had his hands clasped together, wringing them.

Hannibal sighed, heavily, his lips pressing together tightly, as they did when he was annoyed. "And I imagine she encouraged you to accept the job? As a means of saving your conscience?"

"She wasn't wrong. It would have eaten away at me," Will said, looking at the far wall instead of Hannibal, hand tethered tightly to each other.

"It may have, but this new killer's mind is sharp and dark in a way that Garrett Jacob Hobb's was not, Will. I do not share Molly's altruism, I would not sacrifice my husband's newly found peace for anyone else's lives," Hannibal said, steadfastly.

"I am keenly aware that I played a part in your unravelling, Will. I will not pretend I didn't, but I understand, perhaps more deeply than anyone, what a sensitive instrument your mind is. This shy boy has a head full of perversion, I would keep you from it if I could."

Will had already done one scene, he'd already gone there, gotten into the head space, but not the *why* . He wasn't seeing this man everywhere as he was with Hobbs. He wasn't falling down the rabbit hole just yet.

"That's why I have you, Hannibal. To make sure I don't slip ."

Hannibal reached through the hole for Will's hand, again, offering his touch as he stared at Will with deep amber eyes.

"I am, for the first time, beginning to regret my confinement here. I would help you better if I were with you in the field."

Will pulled himself from his own grip and touched Hannibal's hand, looking drawn and worn suddenly. "I can't even get Jack to approve you a view, let alone out there with me."

"Perhaps if it were a condition of your employment. You need not worry, my *doctor* could tell you with all honesty that around you, I am not at risk of attempting to run off." Hannibal shrugged one shoulder, elegantly.

"I don't know that Alana would be so willing to write that off." Will sighed, deep and heavy, focusing on Hannibal's hand in his own to ground himself. "I'll ask. Couldn't hurt."

"All they can do is refuse," Hannibal said with an elegant, proud look at Will. "You wield more power than you realize, you should use it to get what you want."

"I'm not pushy, Hannibal." Not unless Will had to be. He'd put that sort of life behind, and now, here he was holding hands with a serial killer that he almost considered an ex now.

"With Jack Crawford, you must push, or be pushed. He is a Bull, he does not hesitate to use his horns to motivate," Hannibal said, wisely.

Will felt an ache rising up the back of his skull, dull and pounding. He rested his head against the glass, fingers roving over Hannibal's hand. "I am aware."

"You have a headache," Hannibal noted, able to tell, of course, and touched the glass, where Will's head rested against it.

It was starting again, his mind festering over the details. He'd been drinking himself to sleep, and Molly hadn't cared or noticed much. She always fell asleep first. "Yeah."

"In the temples, or behind your eyes?" Hannibal asked, his voice cool and calm, like a doctor's as he watched Will wince.

"Crawling in from the back of my skull, behind my eyes," Will said, closing them as his head touched the cool glass, and listened to Hannibal's voice. "I'm just tired."

Hannibal squeezed Will's hand and pressed a button under his desk, then returned to Will.

Barney stepped in. "Dr. Lecter?"

"Might I trouble you for two extra strength Naproxen, an ice pack, and a glass of water, please?" Hannibal asked. Barney nodded, and left again.

"I usually just down an eighth of whiskey," Will murmured, realizing that Barney had seen them like this, hand in hand, and huffed a laugh at that.

Hannibal sighed through his nose at that, and looked at Will. "I had noticed the bloodshot edges of your eyes, but thought perhaps you had not been sleeping. Does Mrs. Foster know?"

"She knows I drink." To excess? No. He wouldn't let her either. Will opened his eyes, blinking at Hannibal. "I'll take the medication and do this your way for now."

Hannibal shifted his mouth to the side, watching Will closely. "You could be damaging your liver."

"I've been doing that for quite some time," Will muttered, curling his fingers around Hannibal's wrist. "Sorry you won't get the satisfaction of eating it."

Hannibal gave Will a look as Barney came back with the requested items. “If you could leave them for Mr. Graham, that would be lovely, thank you, Barney," Hannibal said.

"Of course," he nodded with a little smile at Will, and petted Imago's head very gently, then showed himself out again.

"Eating you would bring me no satisfaction," Hannibal said when the door was closed.

"Thanks," Will shot over his shoulder, and then turned dreary eyes back to Hannibal, and then pulled away to get the water and the pills, drinking them down. "No? Not anymore?"

Hannibal let go of Will's hand, watching him drink, admiring the way his throat flexed around the swallow of water. "I thought, back in Florence, that eating you might mean that I could keep you forever, the way I have kept Mischa all these years," Hannibal said, quietly.

Will shivered at the thought, and set the glass down, and took the ice pack and let it sit at the back of his neck, near his head, and sat down in front of Hannibal, head bowed. "The dead can't talk."

Hannibal's eyes looked sorrowful, and heavy, and he shook his head. "I was desperate."

"We all were." Will sighed out heavily, head against the glass again, resting there as the ice made his head start to feel a little better.

Hannibal's eyes moved over the scar on Will's forehead, then back to his eyes. "I am *sorry* , Will," he said, sincerely, with the sort of gravity the nightmare stag would have if it bowed its long, feathered neck in apology.

Hannibal never apologized and meant it. He'd never apologized for ripping him open, or getting him locked away...

Will lifted his eyes and met Hannibal's, finger tips in the hole as he gazed at Hannibal.

Damn good thing they had a wall of glass between them, because Will felt only the need to crawl right in there with Hannibal and finally, *finally* kiss him.

Hannibal was *not* sorry for much in his long life. He was not sorry for stabbing Will in the kitchen, he was not sorry for killing Abigail, or any of the others who had died at his hands. He felt no shame for any of that.

But he was sorry he hadn't protected Mischa.

He was sorry he had attempted to consume his best friend.

Hannibal reached out and took Will's hand again, silently, and twined their fingers together, staring at Will's eyes, letting Will see inside him with his remarkable vision, hiding nothing.

And Will never expected apologies for any of those things, but he'd take this one, because it weighed the most on him. "I waited three years for that apology."

Hannibal took a deep breath, and held Will's hand with both of his own, then bowed his head so that his forehead rested against Will's fingers, eyes closed as his hair brushed Will's skin.

He looked like a sinner in a painting, kneeling before a saint, begging for forgiveness, silently.

Will moved his hand, fingers touching Hannibal's short hair, and then carded through it, touching the graying strands softly, acceptingly.

He knew right then he was doomed, that everything he had with Molly was going to come to a hardened end soon, because he couldn't drag her along through this.

Not when he knew his heart was ensnared by a monster.

Hannibal swallowed over a dry throat, feeling the dizzying, sometimes terrifyingly vibrant mix of emotions only Will had ever made him feel. His shoulders sagged a little when Will touched his hair, and Hannibal pressed his cheek against Will's hand, eyes still closed, completely at Will's mercy at the moment.

"I hope that someday you can forgive me for that," Hannibal said, in a slightly rough voice, his eyes wet as he looked at Will's feet before he squeezed his own jaw shut, breathing slowly, fighting the very rare feeling of feeling something so intensely he was at danger of actually losing control.

"I forgive you, Hannibal," Will whispered, letting the ice pack fall back on the couch, inching closer, as close as he could get, rubbing his thumb over the scar on Hannibal's right cheek, the one that matched his own on his left

Hannibal relaxed when Will brushed the scar over his cheekbone, then looked up at him with a tight swallow, and held Will's hand in both of his own again, his eyes wet once more, as they were the night he left Baltimore.

He stared at Will again, the same way, with the same choked up, strangled emotion in his expression, and then kissed Will's fingertips, and held his hand against his own chest.

Will held his breath, and then curled his fingers against Hannibal's chest, over his heart, never once letting his eyes leave Hannibal's, and had to bite his lip to stop it from quivering to see him like this. "This wall is in the way," he stated.

Hannibal smiled, with wet eyes as he stared at Will, and nodded in agreement.

"It is. I miss the feeling of you," Hannibal murmured, honestly and a little brokenly. He had touched Will, often, sometimes just a brush of his hand against Will's shoulder, or his hair, but all of them had been important to Hannibal, he had paid attention to the way Will felt.

Will had never willingly touched Hannibal, never one to make that move, never one to hold promise to what he would do if he had. He clutched onto Hannibal a few times when he was in pain, but that had been it. "Don't suppose they support the ever growing popular therapy trend of hugs here, do they?" he grinned a little, cheeky mostly.

Hannibal chuckled, and shook his head, looking at Will with a confusing, wonderful array of raw emotion in his dark eyes ... love, most of all. "I am afraid that will have to wait, a little

while at least."

Will didn't hug, or offer to hug, people often, it was the best sentiment he could give right now, the fact that he *wanted* to hug Hannibal. "A little while." He spread his hand over Hannibal's chest a little more, palm against the beat of his heart.

Hannibal leaned his forehead against the glass so that Will could touch his heart, his own hand over Will's as he stared at him. "We will give Jack Crawford his new monster, and begin a new chapter of our own."

They'd been playing around with this fantasy for a few days now, and Will couldn't help the smile that breadth across his lips., He had the urge to kiss Hannibal right then, but instead leaned his head against the glass, mirroring him. "Hope we find him soon then."

Again, the dark suspicion that perhaps Will was telling him what he wanted to hear so that he would help him catch the new monster faster than he otherwise might have flickered across Hannibal's mind.

Will was capable of playing him, as the past had shown. There was simply no way to know for certain, but to take the risk.

"Look for photolabs, private video editing firms..."

Will just nodded, he'd already been looking into those, they were doing searches soon. "Jack's on that part."

"He will be a lower level employee, not a manager. He has been there a long time, wherever he works. He is intelligent, but lacks the confidence to apply for anything more than a job that is beneath his potential. Once he acquired the job, he would be sure to keep it, no history of talking back, no interpersonal difficulties. Our new boy has more in common with a passive-aggressive arsonist than someone with the swagger of a psychopath."

Will nodded, filing the information away, though it was just making his head hurt again, and he rested it against the glass once more. "Noted. Let's not talk about it right this second though."

Hannibal noticed the change, and nodded, agreeing to leave their work for the moment, reassured by Will's preference to spend time with him *without* working, instead. "It can wait, of course. Perhaps you need a good night's sleep, Will."

"Doctor knows best," Will said, and patted Hannibal's chest, over his heart and slipped his hand back, and looked at Imago who was on his back, sleeping.

Hannibal chuckled, and moved his bed next to the glass, stretching out on his side to watch Will and the puppy. It was nearly like it had been in Wolftrap, only Will was awake now, and well, and despite being in a prison, Hannibal had never been aware of more beauty in the world.

"When you dream we are together, and you open your eyes, you will see that it is real."

"As real as it can be right now," Will said, and took the puppy, and curled him up against his stomach, and then kicked the blanket up and over them.

"We are closer tonight than we were last night. That is all I ask of the world," Hannibal said, watching as Imago snuggled against Will's chest.

Imago snuffed and settled, and Will turned to his side, arm under his head, watching Hannibal. "I'll apologize now for any sleep talking."

"I look forward to it," Hannibal said with a soft smile.

Will rolled his eyes, but then his lids got heavy, and he started to drift off. "G'night, Hannibal."

The way Will said that, with comfort in his voice, reminded Hannibal of when they first began to become closer, and his dark eyes warmed to hear it. "Good night, Will," he whispered, watching him closely.

Will used to sleep anywhere, especially when he'd gotten sick with encephalitis. He'd slept many times under Hannibal's watch, this time felt no different. He drifted, breathing calmed and even. Imago licked his chin and settled back in, huffing a little, and then closed his eyes again too.

Will slept that way for hours, body tired enough that he didn't even move. Then, he was hit with it, wave of panic that thrust into his chest, the tip of a nightmare engulfing his pleasant dreams, this one of *him* killing Molly and Walter. Blood all over his hands, stained in it from head to toe, over their dead bodies...

"No, no..."

Hannibal opened his eyes, and saw Will start to panic. He reached out, his hand against the glass. "Will," he said, calmly and loudly enough to hopefully wake him. "Will, you are having a nightmare."

Hannibal's voice echoed through his mind, and then a wet nose and tongue against his stubble shook him awake, jolted him from his sleep, still breathing in hefty breaths, arm curled around the puppy who had helped Hannibal get through to him.

It took him a few second of dazed eye wandering to figure out where he was again, jaw working through words that never came.

"Will?" Hannibal asked, hand against the glass as he looked at him, calmly. "Breathe, everything is alright."

Imago licked Will’s chin again, and he turned his face from it, and finally looked at Hannibal. "I woke you. I'm sorry."

"Don't apologize," Hannibal said, and sat up, tilting his head as he looked at Will, and his messy hair. "I never mind waking up to see you. What were you dreaming of?"

"I..." His eyes seemed to glaze back over at the after thought, in hindsight of thinking about it all over again. "I killed Molly and Walter... I.. wasn't *me* ."

Hannibal sighed, and he leaned closer. "Did you place shards of mirror in their eyes?"

Will looked down at his hands, untouched, unscathed, but all he could see were splinters of glass deep in his knuckles. "Yes."

"You are already shifting into his mindset, imagining what he might do, how it would feel to him," Hannibal murmured, and wished he could wrap an arm around Will.

But why his family? It was hardly perfect. It was far from it. A stray among strays. Will rubbed a hand over his face, damp with sweat.

"He's... it's like gaining power."

"He is getting stronger, yes," Hannibal agreed. "It is part of his becoming. The attacks will become increasingly brutal and bloody as the beast inside him demonstrates his power to the world. How did you feel in the nightmare, as our fledgling killer?"

Will grimaced, feeling bile in his throat, and looked away from Hannibal. "Powerful, but... scared."

"Two very conflicting feelings," Hannibal said, supportively. "As though he and the beast were not the same?"

Will leaned over and held his head in his hands, rubbing his fingers over his eyes. "Yes. Powerful, but frightened. Becoming, beckoning."

"Hobbs was the beast, there was no part of him that felt horror at his actions, he was eclipsed entirely by his own darkness," Hannibal said. "What does that tell you about our shy boy, Will?"

"He's different. Delusional, conflicted because of it. Possible childhood trauma..." That didn't leave them with much, that could be a number of people, undiagnosed even.

"He is different, yes, very much a split, although I am not certain whether this is an alter or not," Hannibal mused. "The horror he feels may mean that he can be recovered from beneath the shadow of his monster. There may be hope for him."

"There's no hope when you wake up covered in blood and you can't take it back. Chances are he is very much aware of his actions, a fugue state, not an alter. Present but not in control," Will offered, feeling a little more grounded now, but still shaking.

Hannibal saw it, and instead of simply observing Will's distress, as he used to, he reached out, managing to fit his large hand through the hole, offering it to Will. "A frightening experience, for anyone."

Part of Will wanted to run right now, to go home and pretend he never talked to Jack, that he never read about the crime scene. Hannibal hand was a ground forced, which he took, as an

anchor.

Hannibal changed, salvation perhaps. Maybe this new killer *did* have a chance.

"Yeah..."

Hannibal's salvation was Will, and the way he realized that he indeed wanted to, even /needed/ to save him now, especially from himself. "Are you dissociating, Will? Do you feel faint and floating?"

"I'm fine," Will murmured, lacing his fingers through Hannibal's, pulling himself forward, out of the fog and the water covering his head.

Hannibal squeezed Will's hand, tightly for a second, but not painfully tight, just enough to bring Will's attention back to the present."If I had my clavier here, I would play for you."

Will would continue to have visions of his wife and stepson bloodied and lying on the ground, with mirrors in their eyes, casting the image back to himself, antlers and all. "That'd be nice," he whispered, with a weak, little smile.

"Did you see yourself in their eyes?" Hannibal asked, able to tell Will had seen everything in great, gory detail.

Will swallowed, eyes squeezed shut as tight as his hand wound around Hannibal's. "Yes."

"What were you?" Hannibal asked, calm about the insanity Will was marching through, ready and able to walk through it with him.

"A beast, of sorts. Not one I'm unused to. Just one I haven't seen in awhile," Will said, very carefully, and lifted his eyes to Hannibal finally.

"The beast of your nightmares, from years ago," Hannibal said, suspecting that much. "He is back, *you* are back now. No more pretending."

Will bit the snarled response he wanted to give Hannibal, the one where he kept pretending, denying himself. Instead, he smiled weakly, knowing that this was not a person Molly would find comforting, now would she want to be around.

He warned her, and he did very little to really justify his warning either, knowing, deep down, he'd be back here anyway. "No more pretending."

"I know you are disappointed," Hannibal sighed, and squeezed Will's hand. "You thought you were rid of it, of me."

Will grasped Hannibal's fingers a little tighter as he leaned forward, resting the top of his head against the glass near their hands. "Hoped, I never believed it thoroughly."

"I am afraid you are stuck with us both," Hannibal said, dryly, gazing at Will, even as he looked miserable.

Miserable only in the sense that his mind was hiccuping, resetting, going back to a time he had wanted to forget. Will shivered as his body heat lowered, the sweat drying on the back of his neck. "Not stuck."

"That is a common term for an inescapable association with something you have worked to forget," Hannibal said, lightly, and wished he could run his fingers through Will's hair for him, to calm him down, and just to enjoy the touch of his hair.

"That may be, but if I didn't want to 'stuck' I would have left and stayed gone," Will said, quietly, and lifted his head slowly to look at Hannibal, eyes tired and exhausted looking, but he knew he wouldn't be getting back to sleep.

Hannibal gave Will a soft, sincerely fond smile, and sighed, heavily. He wanted *out* for the first time in years. Will was on the other side and he wanted out. Right now.

His deft mind began to work on the construction of the glass walls, considering all of it's weaknesses, all of the things the designers failed to consider. "Do you have a pen, Will? Preferably one with a clip to keep it in your pocket?"

Will raised his brows, and slid down the sofa to find his jacket, where he would keep something like that, and usually did when out in the field. He pulled the pen out, and hesitantly handed it to Hannibal. "You're not going to get me in trouble are you?"

"Of course not," Hannibal said with a charming smile at Will, then considered the pen and stripped it apart very quickly, and went to one stone wall where the glass was held in place by metal pegs, which were held in place with screws.

"They have used quality materials, titanium coated steel to hold the glass up, unbendable, no matter how motivated I became," he said as he snapped the metal pen-holder, and bit it into a flat shape, then began to use it on the screws. "It was clever of them, but rather lazy to use ordinary screws with which to hold the strong material in place..."

"Aren't there cameras..." he trailed off watching Hannibal, getting to his feet, intent to make sure neither of them got punished for this.

"There are cameras outside the room, but not inside," Hannibal said.

"Should I leave those doors, I would be seen immediately. However, Alana is careful enough not to record any conversations wherein I may insinuate that she had a hand in Mason Verger's death, for example. There is-" He went through five screws in quick succession, and brought his chair over to stand up on it, reaching for the top screws near the ceiling. “-No telling when I might say something about that, or heaven forbid, show the camera a drawing of what transpired. She cannot risk it."

"Blackmail," Will muttered, watching Hannibal as his heart quickened, feeling it in his throat, pacing.

Hannibal smirked at Will as a screw fell to the floor, and he stepped down from his chair, with a dancer's grace, then put the chair behind his desk, cheerfully. "Not at all, at no time did

I ever threaten to expose her...

"I may have mentioned that I was not aware whether or not I talk in my sleep," Hannibal said, innocently, and pulled the four large metal pieces out of the stone wall, then moved the heavy glass like a door. "It *does* happen under stress, I would have no control over what I was saying."

Will just nodded a little, his jaw as tight as his throat was. Being near Hannibal with a glass wall in the way was one thing, but being near him with nothing to separate them was...

He didn't know what was going to happen.

Hannibal stepped out, through the narrow space between the wall, and the glass, then looked at Will without it between them, and went still, just breathing as they looked at each other in silence. "The moment you ask, I promise that I will step back behind the glass, Will."

Will gave a little head shake, that wasn't what he wanted right now, he was still rattled from the nightmare even though he seemed composed. He'd never been the one to push forward and take what he wanted, and he was still not sure he should or not. "Not yet."

Hannibal nodded, as gentlemanly in a prison jumpsuit as he was in his three piece suits.

He took a step forward, and Imago looked up, then jumped off the couch and ran over to him, wagging. "Hello, little one," Hannibal murmured, and crouched to pick the puppy up in his arms, holding him.

Will smiled at that, relaxing a little as he felt his limbs finally move, frozen in place for moment to just look at Hannibal and all his grace. He stepped forward, right next to the other man, taking in his presence. Huge difference without the wall. "He likes you."

It was different without the insurance of the thick glass between them, as different as it might be if a great cat sauntered out of his enclosure to look at Will up close at the zoo, his teeth only an impulse away.

Hannibal, however, looked at Will calmly, his emotion betrayed only by a heightened flush across his high cheekbones. "The feeling is mutual."

Will reached out to touch the pup's head softly, and pet him, fingers brushing near Hannibal's as he did.

Their little surrogate pup.

"Surprised he slept as long as he did."

"He is a growing boy, he needs it," Hannibal said, looking at Will with a new surge of fondness in his dark eyes. Their fingers brushed for just a second, and Imago gave a happy grunt, then burrowed his face against Hannibal's chest. "I am surprised you slept so soundly. Five hours..."

For a second, Will was envious of the pup, snuggled into Hannibal like that. "He'll start howling soon. He did it on the way here."

"Why would he howl? Howling is a way of calling to his pack, letting them know exactly where he is, calling his loved ones home," Hannibal said, and smiled at the pup, then gave him a tiny kiss on the head. "He has everyone here."

Will looked away, biting his lip. "He just howls. But you're probably right, he was looking for you."

"If you stepped away, out of his line of sight, I am certain he would begin again," Hannibal said with a little smile, and turned away with Imago, so that he could not see Will.

"Don’t sound the alarm," Will said, moving so Imago could see him. "We don't need that ."

"You seem to doubt he will miss you," Hannibal said, lightly, and turned again, almost like he was dancing a little.

Sure enough, Imago took a breath, and let out the beginning of a howl for Will.

"Shh, shh .." Hannibal said, like he was comforting a child, and turned back so the puppy could see Will's face. "There he is."

"Hannibal," Will urged, not wanting them to be caught like this, let alone in the middle of the night.

Hannibal patted Imago's back, and sat on the couch, ensuring that the little pup could see both of them at the same time. "It's quite alright, if anyone comes to see, it will be Barney," Hannibal reassured Will.

"You would risk him his job?" Will asked, taking a seat on the couch, too, a pace away from Hannibal.

"I would not cost Barney his job," Hannibal said, calmly.

"If he stepped in, and was distressed at what he found, and therefore felt obligated to report it, I would step back behind the glass," Hannibal said, with a soft shrug while he pet Imago.

Will nodded, wanting to be sure that Hannibal knew his situation well enough, and his orderly. "Okay..." Will stood again, unable to keep still, flashes of his nightmare still fresh in his mind.

"You need not worry, Will," Hannibal said, with his reassuring calm in the middle of the very strange situation, as he pet the puppy who snuggled against his chest. "It is still hours before anyone would think to bring breakfast, this *may* surprise you, but I do not have many visitors."

"Sorry," Will breathed out, one hand to his head, feeling a migraine start in his temples. "I'm on edge. Clearly not the best of company for you risk this for."

Hannibal looked at Will, and handed Imago to him, carefully. "May I access pressure points at the side of your head? I think you are experiencing a tension headache, which can progress into a migraine."

Will's hands shook as he took imago, a perfect distraction as he took a seat near Hannibal again, thigh to thigh. "Yes."

Hannibal turned so that he was sitting behind Will, and raised his hands to press gently against two spots at the base of his skull, then two spots behind his ears. "Close your eyes, if you are able, and take a deep breath," he said, in a hypnotic tone.

Will felt his skin buzz where Hannibal touched him, eyes closed, and breathing deeply with with the movements. He was pretty sure it felt good enough that a little groan escaped him.

Hannibal's fingers were warm and smooth, and the nerve points he pressed on just behind Will's ears seemed to bring his blood pressure down immediately. "Strangely enough, there is a corresponding pressure point in canine ears. If massaged, it can calm an aggressive or nervous animal in seconds, but it is tricky to find in both species."

"Of course you know where to look." Will peeked out of his eyes through the corner, and offers a little smile to Hannibal. "You always seem to be taking care of me."

"In one way, or another, I suppose," Hannibal said softly, looking at Will as though he expected the grateful look, and rubbed his fingers a little, in small circles, which unlocked the tight muscles around the crown of Will's head.

It felt like a head rush, honestly, and his tension seemed to melt away. He started to lean his head into Hannibal's hands, like this was what he'd been looking for for a long time, like this was the skillful touch he craved that no one else had.

"Thank you."

"I have always managed you," Hannibal admitted, wistfully.

"But it was not until the events of Mason's farm that I began to act in your best interests," Hannibal said, as he moved his fingers to Will's temples, locating the spot he wanted before he began to massage there, slowly.

"You've always manipulated me into what you wanted," Will said, quietly, eyes drifted shut as Hannibal's fingers worked him over skillfully. "For a while, I might have let you."

Hannibal appreciated the way they could talk about the past now, frankly, and without pretending either of them had been saints.

"I have no regret for encouraging you to accept yourself, all of your impulses, no matter how dark. I will never apologize for it, it brought us together, I accepted you completely, and for a moment, you accepted me completely," Hannibal murmured, still rubbing Will's temples before he worked on points in his scalp as he spoke.

"When you were in the dining room at Mason's farm, I was bound and branded in the barn. Alana came to me and offered me the knife with which I could free myself for a promise ... that I would save you." Hannibal stroked his fingers through Will's bangs, sweeping some curls from his forehead. "I had never imagined myself anyone's savior."

Will was looking at Hannibal now, eyes bright as the older man had his attention now. He was relaxed, and there was no use fighting or arguing over any of this anymore. "Did you need to make her that promise to save me?"

"I needed to know that someone could imagine me as your protector, after all I had done to you, particularly in Florence, I had great difficulty imagining I was anything but a destructive force. I could not slow or reverse our decay, so I rushed us toward it instead, unable to bear the feeling of losing you slowly," Hannibal confessed, and looked at Will. "I experienced a profound paradigm shift at the moment Alana asked me to promise to become your hero. The promise to her was not what was important to me, but I was seized at once by the realization that I had become different. You had changed me, and until I was asked to save you, I did not know that you had, over our long association, made me capable of genuine care and concern. You made me a better man, Will. You made me into your hero, at least for that moment."

Will let out a sigh through his nose, listening to Hannibal, more than willing to believe it, able to see the change, and had that day he turned himself in. It didn't make anything less difficult if anything it was harder now, as they all moved forward, or stayed in place.

Alana had been the hero there, but Will wouldn't dwell on it, he'd been quiet that day, and knew that if all else failed, he was ready to die -- had been since he found Hannibal.

"None of this is a lie?" Will asked, head canted still in Hannibal's hands.

"No, not a word of it," Hannibal said, and smiled a little. "If I wanted to lie, I would have claimed saving you was *my* idea," he said. "The noble impulse was Alana's, she was the one to point the monster toward the light, all I did was follow it."

Will returned the smile, and reached up to touch Hannibal's hand that was in his hair, leaning back against his arm, and tucked himself under his shoulder. "All I needed to know."

Hannibal paused for a moment when Will leaned against him, unused to someone getting close like that. He hesitated, then wrapped his arms around Will from behind, holding him. Hannibal's chest rose and fell slowly against Will's back, and his palms spread over Will's arm on one side, and his heart on the other.

"No one was more surprised than I at the strange revelation that I *enjoyed* saving you. It felt as though it were something I should have been doing for a long time, and I had finally stepped into the right place, only too late."

Will slouched a little, legs sprawled out as Imago came to rest at his thigh, snuffling at him, but settled.

"Oh, be honest, you just couldn't bare the thought of Cordell cutting my face off," Will teased, his headache subsided, his breathing calmer.

Hannibal chuckled softly, and took a deep breath of Will's hair. "It is the nicest face I have ever seen. It would have been a terrible, terrible waste."

Will seemed to forget everything for a moment, caught between a day dream and reality, the scent of Hannibal surrounding him, cradling him. The weight of his hand on his chest was comforting, it seemed to chase away the bloody, mass murdering images in his mind. For now. "It's been marked enough."

Hannibal touched Will's cheek scar, then his forehead, very, very lightly, looking down at him. "You are not a diamond, a mark here and there does not decrease your value. You are marble, every irregularity makes you more priceless."

Will leaned his head against Hannibal's shoulder and looked up at him, their faces close. He never thought he'd be in this position, this close again, and in the past when they had been, it was dire situations, like Hannibal trying to kill him.

Will wondered if he would finally do it, just end him while he was openly vulnerable. "You really are biased..." he whispered.

"Terribly," Hannibal nodded, gazing at Will's eyes, transfixed by them and whispering all of his words, wondering if Will had a knife hidden somewhere again, ready to finish him off.

He found the thought didn't bother him as much as it should.

They were hopeless honestly, and even if Will had wanted to, a knife would have been taken from him at the front. He had just himself, lounging in Hannibal's arms.

It was moments just like this where Will had been desperately close to kissing Hannibal that he'd been stabbed and wounded for it. He didn't dare press forward, afraid his luck had finally run out. "I've missed you."

Hannibal had never expected to actually hear Will say that, and he committed the sound of those words to memory, in case he never heard it again.

"The last time someone said that to me, they meant they had missed hitting me with a bullet," Hannibal murmured with a little smile, then rested their foreheads together, turning Will in his arms so that he could hold him properly.

"No bullets, no knives, no... needles," Will said, a hushed whisper between them, as he turned, Imago curled up at his back now. "Violence isn't the means to getting through to you."

Hannibal was nearly holding his breath when Will said that, and closed his eyes. "No?"

Will moved his hand to Hannibal's neck, the crest of it, rubbing his thumb over his pulse, feeling the quickening of his heart. "No," he echoed back, just a rough whisper.

"What do you propose would get through to me?" Hannibal asked, gazing at Will so close that he was only a beautiful blur. Hannibal slipped one hand into Will's hair, their lips pulling toward each other, like magnets.

"Something I should have tried years ago," Will offered, a rough sound from his throat, hand sliding back to slip into Hannibal's short hair, pulling his lips into his own.

Hannibal tilted his head and all but fell into the kiss, returning it the second Will's lips touched his own. His heart pounded in his ears and Hannibal hummed against Will's mouth, kissing him like he might never, ever get another chance.

Will had been certain now this was what Chiyoh had meant when she told him to use another means than violence. He wrapped his arm around Hannibal's shoulders, gripping onto him like he might disappear into a dream, sliding their noses together, lips locked perfectly.

Hannibal's hand trembled against the back of Will's head, holding him just as he did the night he gutted him, but this time he did what he had really *wished* he had been able to do instead.

They kissed feverishly, and Hannibal's body tingled all over, from head to toe, his orderly mind spinning, every train of thought derailed.

Will moaned deep from his chest, pulling Hannibal down over himself, care of the pup who curled up on the other end away from them. He locked a leg over Hannibal's hip, kissing him the way he knew they should have been kissing for *years,* feverish and passionate. "Hannibal-
"

Hannibal had kissed many, many people, men and women both, and every single one of them became nameless, their histories obliterated and thrown away because *Will* was kissing and climbing him, pulling him closer. Hannibal rolled over Will, deftly, and kissed him into the couch with all the passion he poured into cooking, into music, into *killing* , it was all for Will right now.

Will's heart went thunderous in his ears as he kissed Hannibal heatedly, all tongue and teeth now, scraping against his lips, sucking on his tongue, having never felt this passion for anyone.

Hannibal parted his lips for Will, eagerly, both of them devouring each other ravenously, like they were trying to kiss hard enough to make up for all the years they'd hurt each other instead. "Will-" Hannibal gasped out between fierce clashes of their mouths, warm all over.

Will knew this was the slippery slope, but the passion that built in him was too hard to ignore, all his feelings bubbling to the surface, embracing the darkness and madness that he'd been told *not* to, because it was right. He sucked on Hannibal's bottom lip, sliding a calloused palm over the side of Hannibal's neck, feeling his pulse race.

Hannibal's lips brushed and bruised themselves against Will's as he tasted Will's mouth for the first time, unable to stop. He let loose a little moan and arched his back, both of his arms slipping under Will's shoulders to hold him right where he wanted him, afraid he might change his mind and run.

Oh, God, he felt like a horny teenager, home alone at last with his boyfriend, finally getting up the nerve to kiss and not they couldn't stop. How could they? How could /he/? Now that he had tasted Hannibal, he wasn't sure anything would ever taste the same again.

He anchored Hannibal around him with his legs, both of them wrapped around his thighs, sealing them together, as close as they could get right now.

Hannibal dropped one knee to the side of Will's hips and raised one badly shaking hand to the side of Will's face, the stroke of his fingers over his cheek and stubble confirming that yes, this was *Will* he was kissing, it was not merely wishful thinking.

He swept his tongue against Will's in his mouth, twining them together, tasting each other before he gave Will's lower lip a soft bite and kissed him again, blood pumping hard all over his body.

Will felt cocooned against Hannibal, bodies tight together, weaving from passionate to gentle with strokes of tongue and hands. He let out a soft moan at the bite, always having wondered what that might feel like-- what any of this might feel like.

Nightmare long forgotten, Will palmed Hannibal's chest over his heart, erratic pulse matching his own. His thoughts were far from what was right, and sinking deeper into what he *needed* .

Hannibal tightened one hand in Will's hair, the other around a fistful of his shirt at the back of his shoulder.

The incredible tension inside him, for Will, had built up over years of gazing and obsessing, and the way Will felt against his lips and tongue now made it all very much worthwhile.

Hannibal's body rocked, slowly, shifting heavy muscle and warm skin over Will, a definite swell against Will's thigh.

"Hannibal..." He sighed, into mouthful of the other man's, rubbing his thigh against the warmth bulging from Hannibal.

Hannibal nudged Will's head back and kissed his neck, slowly, licking and brushing his lips over Will's pulse with a shaky moan, and a harder rock of his hips.

Will gripped Hannibal's jumpsuit, fingers searching for the buttons as he eased a few of them undone, digits shaking as he lost control, completely enamored with the man above him.

Hannibal groaned, and yanked at Will's shirt, popping two buttons off as he opened it, too needy to be elegant about something, for once.

He sucked on Will's sensitive earlobe, then dragged his tongue along the shell of his ear, breathing Will's name as he rutted against his thigh, hard as a rock.

Will was panting with need, and undid the rest of the buttons as far as his hands would allow to go down, their hips pinned together. He swore breathlessly into the air, rutting his own hips against Hannibal.

Hannibal pulled the jumpsuit off, nude and hot beneath it. He kicked it to the floor, and laid over Will again, flushed all over, his cock hard against his stomach. “Will-" he whispered, yanking Will's shirt off as they kissed again, working on his pants.

Will head spun, eyes raking over every inch of Hannibal as the jumpsuit was peeled off, almost to distracted to kiss him again. He shrugged his shirt off and lifted his hips eager to get his pants off too, to *touch* and be touched by Hannibal. He'd never known just /how/ much he wanted this until that moment.

Hannibal smiled against Will's lips and yanked his pants and underwear down Will's hips, actually shaking with need. He kissed Will, hard, then gave his throat a bite, and reached down, stroking Will's cock.

"Oh fuck-" Will groaned, hands scratching up Hannibal's back, to his shoulders, and into his hair, clutching him to his body, as if begging him to bite harder.

Hannibal squeezed Will in his hot hand, and stroked him again as he bit Will's neck harder, sucking at his skin while he thrummed his palm around him, already wet at the tip of his own cock just from the sound Will made.

Will won't beg, at least that's what he told himself, quietly in the back of his mind, while he reached for Hannibal's cock, thumbing the tip, just as he might his own, and groaned, baring his neck for him further. It would mark, but right now none of that matter.

"Ah-" Hannibal gasped at the touch, and rocked his hips forward, into Will's hand, staring down at him with almost black eyes, possessed by lust that had been growing for years.

He kissed Will's lips again,then bit the lower one, and bit his throat again, over his pulse, lathing the hot skin with his tongue as he stroked and tugged at Will's cock, fingers flirting with the crest of his balls every time they went down there.

This was all very new to Will, though the desire had been there, he'd never done anything like this. He took Hannibal's lead, kissing him when they mouths melded together, stroking him roughly with one hand, while clawing down his shoulders with the other, trying to stay in control. His mouth skimmed Hannibal's jaw, teeth dragging against sensitive skin.

Hannibal gasped and moaned at the way Will clawed him, and thrust into his rough hand, enjoying every second of it. "Bite-" he ordered, arching his throat back for Will's teeth, needing to feel the *animal* in him.

Will felt a surge of lust course through him and leaned up, biting into Hannibal's pulse, roughly, feeling the gentle snap of skin under his teeth and the tang of copper on his tongue. He moaned, thumb smearing precome all over Hannibal's cock.

"Will-" Hannibal growled, with his head back, and started to rut harder into Will's hand, his own hand doing the same to Will while the fingers of his other deft hand stroked themselves over Will's balls, then down to his ass, squeezing and spreading.

Hannibal's long fingers brushed lightly against Will's entrance, testing how much he liked sensation there.

Will let out a strangled moaning sound, and dropped one leg to the side of the couch, spreading his thighs. He always knew it would be this way between them, he *wanted* it this

way between them. He sucked blood off his own lip and licked Hannibal's throat again.

Hannibal kissed Will's lips again, tasting his own blood there and almost came from the recognition of it, on Will, but barely held back. He kissed and bit Will's bare neck, down to his chest, sucking on his nipples and biting his flesh, leaving a trail of light bruises from his teeth down to Will's cock, which he sucked, tongue whirling around it expertly before he bobbed his head, pleasuring Will with the instrument of his brutality, his mouth.

Hannibal rubbed two fingers against Will's entrance at the same time, torturing the nerves.

"You--" Will's breath hitched in time with his hips as Hannibal teased his sensitive entrance, toes spread to the floor with pleasure. His jutted his cock into Hannibal's mouth, fiery hot and *perfect* . His hands wrenched into Hannibal's hair, tugging.

Hannibal's mouth, like Hannibal himself, was dark and hot. He sucked and moaned, worshiping Will with his lips, teeth and tongue, and groaned when Will tugged at his hair, then licked his way down Will's balls, and started to spread and rim his entrance, devouring him like he'd been waiting years for this.

Fingers grasped harder into silvering hair, tight and unyielding, thighs spreading more for Hannibal, hips canted up to take his teasing.

"Hannibal..."

Hannibal loved the sound of Will gasping his name like that, and helped Will's perfect body arch up, supporting and spreading him with his hands as he wetted and fucked him from the inside with his tongue, his infamously sensitive and devious tongue.

"Oh-" Will gasped again, overly sensitive there, unaware he could ever be this turned on, or wanting, *needing* . He held the back of Hannibal's head with grasped fingers, keeping his head there, all but begging for more.

This was the way to eat Will alive, Hannibal decided, and plunged his tongue into Will, then his fingers as he sucked his balls, rolling them in his mouth. Hannibal fingered Will, spreading and curling them inside Will, able to feel his prostate easily, and teased it, unsure if anyone had ever, ever shown Will this pleasure before.

The way Will jerked would answer the question for Hannibal. His body felt on fire, lava pooling down in his loins, behind his balls, in his lower back, and whorish moan escaping his mouth. "That's... good."

Hannibal savoured this course of Will for a minute or two longer, then pulled his mouth away, and fingers out, and kissed his way back up Will's slim body to his mouth, and slid into Will's slick body, smoothly, trembling as he did.

Will was stretched open and wet from Hannibal licking and fucking him with his tongue. He gasped as Hannibal hit the hilt, pressing into his prostate with more force than his fingers could. His hands reached for his shoulders again, nails digging in as they kissed, slow and sloppy now.

"Will-" Hannibal gasped, his forehead sinking down to touch Will's as their bodies locked together. He held it a moment, and looked at Will's face before he touched his cheek with one hand and began to rock inside him, slowly.

Will expected to be fucked, but the slow pace Hannibal picked up was anything /but/ that. He wrapped his legs around Hannibal's waist, heels in his lower back, urging him in with each slow thrust. Will met his eyes easily, sucked into the amber hue, and felt them truly starting to blur together.

Hannibal saw gold flecks in Will's eyes, small sparks of his own color there, just as he knew he had tiny bits of blue in the brown of his own eyes, hidden from all but those who looked the closest in full light. He and Will were photo-negatives of each other, a perfect match.

He felt himself move inside Will, and the pulse and squeeze of Will around his cock, and kissed him again, deeply, before his hips sped.

They were finally conjoining completely, Will could feel it, his soul meeting Hannibal's, grasping on and never letting go.

His breath hitched with the speed, biting at Hannibal's mouth, needy and soft. eyes still open to watch him, drowning in his vast, dark pupils.

Hannibal cupped the back of Will's head with one hand, and moaned softly, his whole body flashing hot when Will squeezed around him, and at the feel of his teeth.

Will groaned, tonguing Hannibal's lips and mouth, a slow kiss, languid for the way their bodies were gripping tighter to each other, faster and faster.

"Hannibal..."

Will was everything to Hannibal, he had become his entire world, and being with him this way, hearing his name moaned by Will like that was the most incredible rush he'd ever felt, even better than killing.

"Will-" Hannibal rasped. He swore under his breath, and gripped Will's slim hips, holding him there as he started to tense and burn.

"Harder," Will rasped, feeling his body tense with Hannibal's, able to feel the electric slide of hormones reaching a peak, able to feed off Hannibal's open emotions right now, overly consumed with the feeling of lust.

Hannibal obeyed, gladly, his hips pistoning like they were made just to fuck Will senseless as he hammered into his prostate. Hannibal's eyes were burned black and shining as he stared at Will, panting hard as he pinned him to the couch by his hips.

Will was gasping, panting, Hannibal's name, always on the tip of his tongue when his mouth opened, only muffled when he kissed Hannibal again, opened mouth as he started to come undone, skin buzzing.

"Will, Will-" Hannibal groaned, both of them breathing the sound of the other's name, shaking and losing control at the same time.

Hannibal bit Will's lip again, then his neck and groaned aloud, wordlessly, pounding against Will's prostate furiously as he climaxed so hard that he couldn't /breathe/.

Will's nails dug into Hannibal's skin, hard, as he came with him, able to ride the waves of pleasure pulsing from them both. His moan was loud and guttural, pressed into Hannibal's throat.

Hannibal had always enjoyed sex, the physical, sensual sensations of it, and of course the power struggles and exchanges within ... but with Will it felt ... new.

He let his head drop, his pulse visible in his sweaty neck, and took a deep breath or two, then kissed Will's skin, just above the scar on his forehead, and held him as he caught his breath.

Sex was always very, very exhausting for Will, mentally and physically. He felt high off Hannibal's lust, while still reeling from his own, head spinning. His arms didn't even slack, he held on a little tighter, caressing hands down Hannibal's shoulders and neck.

"I-"

Hannibal tilted his head, and kissed Will's sweaty face, over his cheek scar, down to his chin, then nudged his chin back and kissed his throat, soft and almost awestruck kisses for him. "I know," he whispered.

Will had almost said it, but as conjoined and molded together as they were, it was as if Hannibal /did/ know. He carded a hand through Hannibal's short hair, holding it at the back of his skull, holding him as his lavished kisses all over his sweaty skin.

"I've been so stupid." Will kept himself away from Hannibal this whole time, afraid of their joining, of their blurring together. Now, he had nothing but regret in his decisions.

"Yes, you have, but I forgive you," Hannibal purred with a little smirk in his voice, and kissed the underside of Will's jaw, happily.

Will whimpered a little, over sensitive, and engulfed with Hannibal's feelings for him, nothing like he ever had with Molly.

Oh, God. Molly.

No, he couldn't do that right now, he was /not/ going to ruin this.

He tugged on Hannibal's hair a little, enough to bring their eyes to meet. Hannibal's eyes were bright, shining, and full of rich color under tawny lashes. He stared back at Will with a smile in his eyes, just as adoringly as he had that day in the Uffizi in Florence.

"I am teasing. We have both been stupid," Hannibal whispered.

Will nuzzled Hannibal's nose with his own, adoring him the way he adored Will right back. "I know. I just..." He kissed Hannibal again, slowly, finger nails scratching against his scalp gently.

Hannibal kissed Will back, and wound one hand into his curls, as he did whenever he had a chance, for any excuse at all throughout their friendship. "I simply saw our potential sooner," Hannibal whispered. "We quickly fell into an intimacy from which we never recovered," he said, paraphrasing a favorite American author.

Will offered him a fleeting smile, which quickly turned to remorse and regret. He'd made so many mistakes, though that night Hannibal gutted him, he had hoped it had been too late, but Hannibal was two steps ahead.

And mournful, as if he had already lost him.

Will felt his stomach clench, suddenly feeling very vulnerable. "I guess normal isn't exactly everything I wanted. Because we're not normal..."

Hannibal swallowed, and stroked his hand against the side of Will's jaw, up to his cheekbone. "What is normative is normal, and the abnormal are misunderstood, and isolated. Perhaps you did not long to be normal, perhaps you have always longed for someone with whom your abnormality is the ideal."

"I did-- I *do* ." Will thought he wanted something like Molly, so simple and easy, fishing and hunting...

He liked those things, he loved them even. But what was it without someone he could confide in wholeheartedly?

Molly hardly understood, and that was his fault, he left off very keen details of his life, and she never asked.

"Hannibal..." he sighed and kissed him again, overwhelmed with the fondness radiating from his chest.

Hannibal kissed Will's lips the second he moved to do it, like he'd /known/ Will would do that and was simply /waiting/ to catch the impulse and kiss him solidly, right when he needed it the most. It seemed like Hannibal fell in love with Will slowly, over months and years of watching him, cataloguing a billion cherished habits and moments; Will, however, was only now falling just as deeply in love, all at once.

Everything was catching up to Will, his feelings, their feelings, /everything/. He knew he loved Hannibal, he knew it the second he betrayed him, the second he left him to die, the second he walked out of his life.

He never admitted though.

Will kissed Hannibal heated little, lovingly, one hand on his face, stroking his jaw line. "Would you trust me if I told you I loved you?"

Hannibal's dark eyes went wet for a rare moment, and he couldn't answer with words, just nodded solemnly, throat tight.

Will had the ability to take his heart strings and make them sing, to take his breath away with a look or an insinuation so to hear that ...

It was incredible.

Will cupped Hannibal's face and kissed him again, softly this time, thoroughly, tongue sweeping into his mouth in broad, but gently strokes, proving what he had just said to him, the swell of his heart beating faster.

Hannibal sighed, and closed his eyes, kissing Will back, deeply. He felt like he was dissolving, but in a /blissful/ way, like the ground moved under them, and he couldn't be bothered to so much as look up from Will kissing the love he spoke to him into his lips, finally in the same place at the same time.

Will wrapped his arms around Hannibal's shoulder again as they kissed, finally feeling like he belonged, like this was where he needed to be, and the thought of leaving pained him. He'd worry about that in the morning.

"I do," Will said, very quietly, between breaths, panting again. "I love you."

"I love you, too," Hannibal whispered with tears in his eyes. The words had been stuck in his throat for years, waiting to be said, and now they tumbled out, soft like velvet after so much turbulence while they were being held in. "I always will," he added, and placed his hand against the side of Will's face, cupping it as he stared at him, heart racing.

Will had known it for a while, but it wasn't until he could get near Hannibal again after a long pause that he understood. He felt so stupid, and even though his better judgment was to run, he couldn't just do that. "When this is over, we'll figure out a way."

Hannibal swallowed, and rested their faces together, then wrapped both long arms around Will, and closed his eyes with a deep sigh. "We will," he whispered, against Will's ear, afraid to let /go/ of him.

"Can you hold out until then?" Will asked, voice soft and fragile sounding, not sure what he was going to do until that time came, but he'd... figure out something.

"I have waited three years behind a glass wall just to hear you say my name again," Hannibal said, looking at Will close up, brushing his curls with his long, elegant fingers. "I can wait a few weeks longer."

That made his heart swell in ways he could only imagine before this, and he kissed Hannibal's lips softly, gazing at him. The only person who ever got to see behind the barriers. "I'll come as often as I can."

"I will be overjoyed to see you every time," Hannibal said, and gave a soft laugh, like he just understood a joke. "Like a dog who spends most of his life waiting for you to come home."

"You are like a lot of my strays," Will said, but with every ounce of affection he could afford, for being, well, him. "Just harder to keep in line."

Hannibal rolled his dark eyes, but couldn't keep from smiling. He laid beside Will, arms around him, still, sandwiching Will between himself and the couch, Hannibal's long leg hooked behind Will's knee as he gazed at him. "I bite."

"I know," Will sighed, baring his neck to Hannibal to see the bite he left. "I'll have to hide that..."

Hannibal touched the bite with his fingers, then kissed it, eyes closed. "For how long?"

"Until we figure this out," Will whispered, unafraid of the mark expect what it meant to Molly. He had to figure a way to let her go gently.

Hannibal nodded, and kissed Will's throat again, without teeth this time, then ran his hand down the subtle lines of Will's arm muscles. "Very well. You are ... exquisite."

Will closed his eyes for second, enjoying the feel of Hannibal lavishing him, and kissed his ear, then his neck. "You trust me? I want nothing more right now than to be with you?"

Hannibal tilted his head when Will did that, like a cat moving into a sunbeam, and gave a deep sigh, his bare chest rising and falling slowly as he did so. "Yes," he whispered, and opened his eyes to look at Will, the way his back flexed when Will kissed his neck. "I believe you."

Will felt more than vulnerable right now, but knew Hannibal wouldn't destroy him, not this time. "Good," he sighed. "I... need you."

Hannibal stroked his fingers over the landscape of Will's flexing back, and closed his eyes with another sigh. "I need you, too," he said, honestly.

There was no hiding with Hannibal, he'd find him anyway, some way or another. The sooner they found this killer, the sooner Will could put his 'family' out of danger and be where he was meant to be.

He rested his head against Hannibal's, with a sigh.

He had to treasure this time, they might not get more a while.

Hannibal kissed Will again, adoringly, and then gazed at him, memorizing the way he looked, the way he breathed. "I want to keep you."

Will huffed a chuckle breath against Hannibal's mouth, forgetting how naked and exposed he was. "And where would you keep me, Hannibal?"

"Here," Hannibal smiled, nuzzling Will. "On this couch, in this room, just as we are."

In a perfect world, where no one else existed, he thought, squeezing Hannibal's shoulders with his arms, wrapping them more tightly around him, then his legs around his hips. "For

now we can."

"For now," Hannibal agreed, and kissed Will's lips again, deeply, lost in the experience of finally being like this with him.

The dream-like bubble they put themselves in for the moment was impenetrable, and Will found himself revelling it, lost in the touch of Hannibal's soft lips against his own wind chapped, and well kissed ones. He nuzzled Hannibal's nose with his own again, eyes half closed, tracing circles down Hannibal's skin, and shifted under him, just to feel the way their slick bodies moved together, perfectly.

At their feet Imago snored softly, and Will chuckled at the noise.

Hannibal moaned a little when Will moved under him, and enjoyed the way his laugh made Will's throat vibrate when he laughed, kissing it. "I have always adored your laugh."

"I suppose you adore the way I talk in my sleep too? Or the way I breathe?" Will asked, a teasing southern drawl to his tone, relaxed and carefree at the moment.

"I happen to," Hannibal whispered against Will's lips, dark eyes half closed as he gazed at him, hand over the back of Will's neck. "I love many, many things about you."

"Flattery will get you nowhere," Will said, softly, even if that weren't entirely true, considering their position right now. However, Will never needed Hannibal's flattering words to fall in love with him, just Hannibal himself.

"Good, I am enjoying myself, exactly where I am," Hannibal purred, and sucked Will's earlobe.

Will canted his head, and nuzzled into the feeling of Hannibal doing that, let out a little gasped moan. "But that might get you round two..."

"I would not object at all," Hannibal smiled, and scraped his teeth over Will's earlobe, then down his neck to kiss his shoulder.

Will felt sore, but not in an entirely painful way, his arousal making it more than acceptable right now. He wanted to feel the ghost of Hannibal inside him for days after, when he walked, when he sat down, when he drove...

He rolled his hips against Hannibal's, half hard again. "Make the best of the time we have."

Hannibal smirked, and kissed Will's lips, harder, then rocked against Will again, getting hard, quickly. "That is a very good idea..."

Will gently pushed on Hannibal's shoulders, guiding him over and down under him as he crawled over him this time, kissing him down into the cushions. He straddled the other man, still we from Hannibal's come in him, and rubbed his entrance over Hannibal's cock slowly.

Hannibal's eyes closed and he rolled over, then moaned and clutched at Will's hips, guiding him down over his cock while he pushed up, into him.

"Mmmh-" he moaned, inarticulate for once in his life, already thrusting.

Will flushed, hands on Hannibal's chest, carded through his hair there, tugging gently as he rocked his hips down to meet the other man's, hitting /that/ spot easily. He bit his bottom lip with a groan.

Hannibal gasped Will's name, and his stomach flexed as his hips canted upward, driving his cock into Will's prostate.

He pressed his heels into the cushion, and used the leverage to fuck Will, hard, lost in the beauty and pleasure of him.

Will's hair was damp with sweat, his body shaking as he rode Hannibal, quivering against him from his fingers to his arms, gasping groans.

"Hannibal-"

It felt like he was dreaming all of this, again, only much, much better than any dream about Will ever was. Hannibal gripped Will's forearms and snapped his hips up, against Will's ass, staring at him with black eyes while their bodies rutted and slid, locking and unlocking over and over.

Will's mouth dropped open as Hannibal's slammed into his prostate, shock waves of pleasure coursing down his spine, causing his hips to buck wildly as he groaned.

"Will-" he groaned, darkly, watching Will ride him and the incredible look of bliss on his face at being fucked like this. It was something he had only imagined before, and the reality was even more breathtaking.

Hannibal gripped Will's cock, stroking at the same time, desperate for more of that look.

Will rutted out another moan, curls sticking to his head with sweat now, one foot on the floor to ground him, leveraging himself with the clash of their hips. He leaned back, all but thrusting into Hannibal's hand each time he ground down on the other man.

"Look at you," Hannibal moaned, roughly, his hairy chest heaving as he fucked Will from below and stroked him at the same time, uncontrollably aroused.

How Will ever went without /this/, he would likely never know, but he was enjoying it, enjoying feeling Hannibal's need for him, coming off of him in waves, soaking in through Will's skin.

"So close-" he choked out through groan, peaks of pleasure rolling down his back to his thighs where his ass slapped into Hannibal's hips.

"Then come," Hannibal rasped, his voice rough and dark, longing to see Will lose control while he screwed himself on Hannibal's cock.

"Come, show me ... Come ..."

Will let out a loud moan, rattling out of his chest as he ground himself down on Hannibal's cock, over and over, until his body shook and tensed around the other man, fingers clenched against the skin of his torso, coming hard in Hannibal's hand.

Hannibal's lips fell open and he came as he watched Will, completely undone by the experience of feeling Will orgasm around him and against his palm at the same time.

Still buried deep in Will, Hannibal erupted thick and hot, gasping in broken languages.

Chapter 2

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Chapter Notes

> I know we said that we wouldn't be adding on to this, but we decided the story still remains the same for a few parts, so we'll continue to add onto this until it changes up. Enjoy!

Home for a few days, Will had avoided his wife the best he could, though her advances were not easy to shy off, and he more or less was able to shrug it off as part of the job she had helped push him into. He didn't hate her for it, it got him back to Hannibal.

Imago was asleep in the seat next to him in the truck, tucked around a bottle of red wine, which Barney said Hannibal could have with him the last time he left.

Once there, Will got out and put Imago on his leash and grabbed the bottle, getting checked at the door and told to leave his keys, just like last time, and was shown over to Barney.

"Hello again."

Barney nodded at Will with a smile in his eyes, and walked up to Will, then smiled at Imago. "Wow, the little guy has grown since last time. Can I give him a treat? I've been saving it.."

"Of course," Will said, sure that he wouldn't tell Hannibal about that, considering the diet he picked out for the pup, of which he brought some just in case his journey home didn't happen.

Barney pulled out a little milk bone from a bag in his pocket, and offered it to Imago, who sniffed at it, and took it in his mouth, crunching the little cookie with a wag of his tail. "He's been better, lately," Barney said, conversationally.

"Has he?" Will asked, as they walked down the hall toward Hannibal's confinement. "I'd hoped after the last visit he would be." Will was away for some days, he hoped it hadn't made Hannibal too restless.

"Much more upbeat," Barney said with a nod, and walked Will through security, then started to lead him to the first set of doors. "Of course he looks up at the opening door now," Barney smiled.

"Does he not usually?" Will followed as he screwed his ring off his finger and slid it back into his pocket where it belonged.

"No, he gave the impression that no one was worth the effort before," Barney said, with a little amusement in his voice.

"He would," Will sighed, shaking his head. Will had always been Hannibal's exception. He didn't kill him when he gutted him, he could have though. He let Will see him, no one else.

"Dr. Chilton's noticed that you were a visitor, of course. He's down here a lot more than he needs to be," Barney said, unlocking the second door.

Will bit back the annoyed noise from his throat, biting his tongue instead. "So Hannibal tells me. I wonder what his wife thinks of that..."

Not that Will was one to talk.

"Haven't the slightest idea, he never mentions her," Barney said and opened the last door for Will.

Sure enough, Hannibal looked up from what he was doing, which was cooking something over a portable, tiny oven that he used in his cell.

The air smelled incredible, like something zesty underscored by something else, sweet and rich. A table was set in Hannibal's cell, for two.

"Good afternoon, Will," Hannibal said through the glass.

Will just smiles at Barney as he walks in, and Imago immediately bolts forward to try and get to Hannibal. "Afternoon, Hannibal."

Barney closed the door behind them and beckoned Will to the glass cell.

"You may enter his cell, but by doing so, you have to acknowledge that you are absolving the hospital of liability," Barney said, and pulled a form out of his pocket for Will to sign.

"I have every faith that Doctor Lecter won't cause me harm," Will said, looking at Hannibal, and then signed the paper, handing the pen back to Barney. Imago pawed at the doors, looking to Barney to let him in.

"Then this is where I leave you," Barney said, and unlocked the glass panel that could open like a door. "Enjoy your visit, Doctor Lecter," Barney said.

"I certainly will, Barney, enjoy your lunch," Hannibal said, and turned the heat down on what he was cooking, then turned to face Will and Imago as Barney showed himself out.

"Thank you, Barney," Will called over his shoulder, and stepped in, letting Imago off his leash, and he went to sniff out Hannibal.

Will undid his jacket and set it down over one of the chairs.

Imago ran over to Hannibal, who picked him up, and petted him in greeting, holding him in his arms, then looked at Will.

"He has grown in a few short days, although the days have not felt short at all."

"No, they have been increasingly long," Will decided, just then, agreeing with Hannibal. He laid the bottle of wine on the table, and then set his hands over the jacket on the chair, leaning against it.

"I didn't know what to bring. Hopefully this one goes well with... whatever you're making."

Hannibal looked at the wine with a little smile, then set it down and walked to Will, gazing at him openly before he touched the side of his cheek, still unable to believe they had actually consummated their feelings for each other.

"It will, thank you, it's a lovely thought," he said, and held Will's gaze before he leaned down and kissed him hello.

Will smiled up close at Hannibal, glad the wine was good enough, even if he hadn't paid a lot for it, he couldn't afford as much as he'd like to, not with the price of gas just to get here.

It was worth it.

Will leaned up and into Hannibal, kissing him back, just softly with a little sigh.

Hannibal felt a thrill of joy rushing up his spine when he kissed Will, the simple pleasure of being able to greet him like this was a massive relief. Once he was satisfied that he had made Will a tiny bit light-headed, Hannibal pulled back to look at him.

"Lunch is ready, if you'd care to take your seat," Hannibal said, with emphasis on the word /your/, like the familiar position across the table from Hannibal was Will's, and always had been

Will took it, and sat down, lips still tingling from Hannibal's against his, and he sighed, contently. Imago sat his feet, and curled up there.

The wine didn't have a cork, Will had made sure of that, it was synthetic, and easily removed, since having a corkscrew was likely not something they would give Hannibal.

"Is it still a surprise?"

Hannibal had plates on the table and plastic utensils, clear plastic cups. "Not for too much longer," he said to Will and arranged the food on the larger plate, then carried it over and set it between their spots.

"Pollo Lemonata Piccata with asparagus and parmesan risotto," Hannibal announced, his eyes smiling proudly at Will, fairly sure he would like it.

Will now thought that perhaps a white was better, but the red would do.

"It smells amazing," he said, so used to tuna and other fish dishes that this was something extraordinary. He pulled the fake cork from the bottle and poured some into the plastic cup, and then leaned over to pour some for Hannibal as well.

"Thank you," Hannibal said, with a proud shine to his eyes as Will poured him some wine, and Imago got up on Hannibal's bed to nuzzle in his blankets, able to recognize his own smell on the one he had the other night.

"It occurred to me that you've had enough fish."

"I have. We eat a lot of what we catch," Will said, and though he loved fish, there was only so much he enjoyed it.

He set the bottle down and sat down again, pulling the chair in a bit toward the table.

Hannibal dished up Will's plate, and his own, and sat down with Will for dinner for the first time in years.

"How is your neck?"

Will wore high collars for a few days, and the mark was vanishing, now greenish in color, but the teeth marks remained where Hannibal's teeth sunk in. "Healing," he said, punctuated evenly, and took his plate and set it down and cut into the chicken. He tasted it. "That is amazing."

Hannibal smiled at the compliment, and took a bite of his own with a little nod. "A larger kitchen and more time would have made it even better, but thank you," he said, and watched Will enjoy the intense, zesty flavors that had soaked into the chicken.

"Do with what you have... for now," Will said, quietly, and forked some risotto into his mouth with a hum, licking his bottom lip as some of the sauce landed there.

Hannibal smelled, and then sipped the wine Will bought for him. "I am reminded of the time you brought wine to me for a dinner, then left to go and be 'anti-social'," Hannibal smiled at Will. "I was very disappointed, I wanted you to stay."

"It was terrible wine then, too," Will said, sipping his own. He honestly didn't know the difference, but Hannibal only seemed to enjoy the fact that Will thought about bringing it at all.

"I kept the bottle for myself. A gift from you was too rare and valuable, whatever it's price, to waste on a dinner party. I served it to you the next time you came to eat with me. You didn't recognize it, but that hardly mattered," Hannibal said, softly.

"Oh." Will flushed, a little embarrassed by that, and shoveled more food into his mouth.

Hannibal just smiled, touched. "It was a Pinot Noir with a black bird on it," Hannibal remembered. "I thought that was, perhaps, an unconscious association you had made, given the blackbirds gathered around the first scene I left for you."

"It probably was," Will laughed, a goofy sort of grin on his face that had his brows raised into his slightly receding hairline. "Nothing ever coincidental when it comes to you."

"Your mind is far too adept at symbolism and metaphor for very much of what you choose to be an accident," Hannibal said, admiringly, and looked at this bottle. "What can we say about this bottle and what it may mean?"

Will chuckled, chewing his food first, not to be rude. "It means I'm broke and this was the only bottle that had a screw in cork."

Hannibal laughed at that, and looked at the label, just for fun. "Fixing boat motors does not pay well?" Hannibal asked, as he mulled over the label.

"It pays enough. I had a little extra money since I didn't need to buy dog food this week," he explained, a smile still in his eyes despite talking about what a downgrade he made. "I won't get a check from the FBI until the case is finished."

"The government have never been the sort to pay a man until they are certain he doesn't die in the process of his work," Hannibal said with a sigh, and set the bottle down. "The Wolftrap ... an interesting title. Feeling trapped, Will?"

"Something like that." Will chewed another bite, delicately. Home had been tense and awkward lately, but Molly seemed like she wasn't bothered, Will had warned her.

Hannibal looked at Will, and tilted his head in a knowing manner, reading him. "Hm."

"Don't do that," Will said, able to read Hannibal right back, they were like mirrors to each other.

"I can't help it, not anymore than you can," Hannibal said, innocently, and took another bite of his chicken."She is utterly unconcerned, I take it? Oblivious, even?"

"I warned her when she pushed me to take this case, that I would be... different." Will scoffed, poking at his food as he pushed it around his plate. "Her response was 'I won't be'."

Hannibal gave Will an almost sympathetic look over the table. "Your discomfort is not the issue, I suppose."

"She was afraid if I didn't take the case, that I would regret not helping, and... sour our home we made because of it," Will sighed.

Maybe it was his fault, for never really opening up to her and letting her know just how horrible a life working for the FBI had been.

But that wasn't entirely true. He had Hannibal out of it, sort of.

Hannibal sighed, and sipped his wine. "Her concern is still not for your distress, or for the change you warned her of, the misery you will endure, her concern is that your regret might spoil the Eden you've built," Hannibal said, flatly. "As a man, it is your task, indeed, expected of you to suffer quietly."

"To provide and work, and suffer alone," Will said quietly, and took a very long sip of his wine, clearly wound up now because of this conversation, shoulders tense.

"To provide work, protection, housing and to manage your suffering alone. Her understanding is, in her mind, unnecessary, her *presence* is expected to be enough to anchor you, without additional effort."

Hannibal poured them both a little more wine.

"And I've let her think that," Will whispered, wishing now he had whiskey instead, jaw shifting as he watched Hannibal moved around him elegantly. "How is it you make even a prison jumpsuit look amazing?"

Hannibal chuckled through his nose, and picked up Will's finished plate, as well as his own, to put in the transfer box, then removed a wooden box from it with ice inside and their desserts. "Is that redirection in an effort to change the topic, or has your simmering resentment unleashed a new wave of forbidden admiration?"

"Both," Will said, almost bitterly, but watching Hannibal made the bite in it die off at the end, desire edging into his voice.

Hannibal set the oak box on the table, and leaned over it to tilt Will's face up to look at him with a devilish smirk. "Good," he said, and kissed him hard.

Will set his glass down, and held on to Hannibal's forearms as they kissed, utterly taken with him, and wanting nothing more than to forget everything and concentrate on him.

Hannibal basked in the heat of the kiss, and brushed his tongue over Will's as he slipped his hand into Will's curls, tugging them lightly as he sucked the taste of the wine from Will's tongue.

Will groaned at the tug, and sucked on Hannibal tongue for a moment, wrapped up in his heat and warmth, his admiration and love for Will. "I missed you," he murmured against Hannibal's mouth, gazing at him.

"I missed you, too," Hannibal whispered against Will's lips, and kissed them again, and again, like he couldn't get enough, but forced himself to take a breath. "As I think you will be able to tell from dessert, you have been on my mind, and I've been eager for you to return."

"What have you made?" Will asked, not willing to take his eyes off Hannibal, squeezing his arms with his weathered hands.

Hannibal stole one more kiss, and rested their profiles together, the light shining on his silvery hair with his eyes closed before he straightened with a little smirk. "Something I am certain you do not get at home," he said, slyly, and opened the oak box, releasing cold mist that rolled into the air. "Packed with a little dry ice," Hannibal explained and set a simple, frosted glass dish in front of Will with what looked like three small scoops of ice cream in it.

"Affogato is a style of dessert in Italy, it means 'smothered'," Hannibal said, as he put the box away and came back with a very small thermos. He opened it and steam escaped. "Gelato topped with hot espresso, the meeting of two opposites that balance and compliment each other: heat and cold," he said as he poured the shots of hot espresso over the gelato.

The effect was otherworldly, steam and cold mist swirling around it theatrically. Hannibal handed Will the spoon. "I chose a rather unusual flavor for you, but I wanted it to be something you would enjoy, not simple and sweet."

Will watched, entranced by Hannibal's actions, and looked at the sweet and savory dessert set in front of him, lifting his spoon to scoop out a bit. "You didn't make it?" he asked, though not complaining, as he slid the spoon into his mouth, and pulled it back out slowly, humming.

"I don't have the facilities here to make gelato," Hannibal smiled, and sat across from Will, watching him enjoy the rich, customized dessert.

"Nevertheless, I wanted you to enjoy your own flavor. I believe everyone should have a gelato that suits them, like fragrances, they need to be ... fitting. For you, whiskey and walnut with a hint of salted caramel."

"Is that how you see me? Golden, bitter-sweet liquid, and a little nuts?" Will asked, teasing of course, and took another bite, relishing it.

"There is, of course, the lingering impression of something deliciously *salty* about you that I haven't been able to forget in the last few days," Hannibal purred.

Will had dipped his head for another bite when Hannibal said that, and looked up and over at him, brows raised, and then put the spoon in his mouth again. He licked the spoon clean, and then his lips. "Is that right?"

"I did pass on an exact recipe for your flavor to the Gelattoria," Hannibal mused, and leaned over the table again, then kissed Will's wet lips, tasting the subtle undertone to the boozy dessert that he'd been craving since Will left last time.

"You flavored profiled me into a dessert," he stated against Hannibal's mouth, kissing him a little deeper. It was sweet, touching even, considering Hannibal still wanted to *eat* him in some ways.

Hannibal nodded as he kissed Will over and over, eating the taste of *him* from Will's lips, which was better than any spoon he could imagine. Finally, he pulled back, and sat down again with a little smile.

"Almost perfect."

Will groaned, gladly sharing the taste of his dessert with Hannibal, wanting to share more than that with him, but he'd be patient. He licked his bottom lip when Hannibal sat back down, and spooned in another bite to his mouth.

"Almost?"

"There is room for improvement, I'd be happy to perfect the recipe when we're somewhere with the right equipment," Hannibal said, and almost batted his eyes at Will with a smirk.

"And of course, I'll need repeated sampling.

"You are... something else," Will said, taking the last bite, and slid it into his mouth gracefully.

Hannibal watched Will eat. He had always, always enjoyed cooking for him, with or without those who deserved to be consumed in the recipe. "I'll take that as a compliment."

"You've dropped me down to a level where I am out of words for you," Will explained with a loose smile, one he only seemed to carry for Hannibal these days, and maybe his dogs.

Hannibal's eyes lit up at that, amused as he reclined a little in his chair and sipped wine. "And yet you communicate so splendidly without them, dear Will."

Will raked his eyes down Hannibal's form and set the empty dish aside after spooning out the melted mess at the bottom and sucking it off the spoon. "It's a habit we are used to sharing together."

"A habit I hope with last for many, many years," Hannibal said and watched Will scrape the bottom of the bowl, actually *enjoying* the sound of it.

Will took up his wine in hand, and downed the last of it, and then pushed out of his chair. Ambling toward Hannibal, he straddled his lap, fitting himself perfectly up against him, like a missing puzzle piece.

"Many years..."

Hannibal pulled Will into his lap with a warm smile, and kissed the side of his neck, slowly, up to Will's ear.

"I cannot think of anything in the world that would make me happier."

Will nuzzled against Hannibal's mouth, like a dog who loved being pet and given attention, showing just how much he /trusted/ the man below him.

"You will grow bored with me someday..."

"Never," Hannibal said, in an ardent whisper, like he was swearing it to his god.

"No matter how restless my mind, my heart will always be content next to yours."The day one of them actually did die was going to be the day the other died, too. Will sighed. "Beating together," he said, resting his hand over Hannibal's heart.

Hannibal put his own hand over Will's hand, his eyes going soft when Will did that. "As they have been for years already," Hannibal murmured, and traced his hands down Will's back.

"Even apart." Will sighed and pressed their foreheads together, missing every part of Hannibal; missing him in ways that he told himself he shouldn't, and convinced himself he didn't need.

"As I said once before, our mind palaces share rooms. We were never truly separated," Hannibal murmured.

Hannibal was always in the back of Will’s mind, even when he was trying not to. It was an inevitable outcome that he knew was coming one way or another. "How often did you visit me there in the last three years?"

Hannibal's eyes were mournful, but he smiled a little at Will, and sat across from him again. "Every day. I met you in the Norman Chapel, in my old office in Baltimore, in my dining room, and of course in the stream from Wolf Trap that has encircled my mind palace," Hannibal said. "The land around it was Lithuanian, slowly, Wolf Trap has grown over it, and you patrol the borders, fishing and roving with your pack."

Will smoothed his hands down Hannibal's chest, and back over his shoulders. He leaned and kissed him, softly, delicately. "I all but abandoned mine until recently."

Hannibal looked up at Will as he spoke, admiration and gratitude in his eyes. "You preferred to spend as much time out of the complex intricacy of your own mind as possible. Thinking about your choice was perhaps dangerous, you were uncomfortable reaching the conclusion that your new happiness was only what Jack might have thought would make you ‘well’."

"It's what I thought I needed to make me 'well' and 'normal'. It was all lies." Will had never been normal, and was far from the standards of normalcy after he met Hannibal, and everything changed.

"I can only assume you haven't spoken to Molly about your feelings," Hannibal said, not a question, but an educated guess.

And moving away from that topic didn't last long. Molly was simple, easy going, and hardly a threat. Will liked her that way, it left solitude. "I don't know that she would understand."

"Is your aim to preserve your marriage?" Hannibal asked, calmly, but seriously.

"No," Will said, honestly, aware that he'd be throwing away a lot with that, but it wasn't fair to string along the two. "But I need to leave things on a good note. Leave them stability."

"There is no good way to tell her about your feelings," Hannibal said, simply. "It will hurt her, sooner, or later. That is unavoidable."

The haze of the wine was fading out of his blood stream as it seemed to boil and dissolve all the sudden. She would at some point suspect anyway, and he had to get it done, but doing it with the notion that Hannibal was because of it...

Not a great choice.

Will sat back on Hannibal's thighs, close to his knees, hands spread, and a little distant. "I know."

"You are, of course, hesitant to hurt someone who is largely blameless. Molly's most attractive quality is her harmlessness, after all," Hannibal sighed. "But I urge you not to delay."

Will could be bitter and rude, often, disgruntled even, but he was as caring as they came, it was a weakness really, a chord hit with his empathy. "I know... I do."

Hannibal touched the side of Will's scruffy cheek with one hand, tenderly, and gave him a soft kiss on the lips, then hugged him like he was comforting him when he was sick ... which he wished he had done more often. "You are kind, there is a reason why it is difficult to find a kind surgeon, they hesitate to make the cut."

"Hesitations kills." Will was less likely to hesitate with Hannibal near, with his mind with in his mind, sharing a space, combined. It was the gentle nudge that pushed him to kill, to do what needed to be done. The darkness that would swell over him.

He had no hatred for Molly, though. None whatsoever. It was difficult to be cruel to someone who had done nothing but accept him.

"It can," Hannibal sighed, and kissed the top of Will's head. "I am sorry I cannot lend you my clinical indifference. If I could, I would," he whispered, feeling a *tug* in his heart for Will's pain, for how much he dreaded hurting someone who had never hurt him.

Will took a deep breath, and let it out slowly, audibly, and leaned his forehead against Hannibal's, wrapping his arms around his shoulders. "It's all about timing."

"And yet, you must acknowledge that there will be no good time, there will be no golden moment where what you must do will not hurt, and will not carry with it the consequence of their anger," Hannibal whispered, honestly.

Will wanted to melt into Hannibal and never come out, and pretend none of this ever happened. He closed his eyes to imagine just that, swirling into darkness, sinking down into it, thick like blood.

Will just sighed, though, knowing Hannibal was right, and felt himself sucked right back to the surface. "I'll figure it out."

Hannibal held Will to him, letting the slightly buzzed brunet rest his head on his shoulder.

"I know you will," Hannibal nodded, then buried his nose in Will's soft, dark hair, cherishing the scent and feeling of it. "If I know you, you will be driven to do it sooner rather than too much later."

Honestly, the deeper Will got into the case, the more he knew he couldn't be around Molly and Walter anyway, he would end up hurting them, somehow, and he couldn't distance himself forever without some reasoning.

He kept having the nightmares, standing over them, covered in blood, naked, and drenched in it.

"It's dangerous for them to be around me anyway."

Hannibal nodded, agreeing with Will there. "I have seen you absorbed in a case like this, and you become dangerous, there is no doubt about that. Being around me is perfectly safe, I am

fully aware of what you can do. I do not think Walter and Molly are, I don't think they can comprehend it."

"Walter is too young, and Molly..." he shook his head, and buried his nose in Hannibal's neck, taking a deep calming breath, not wanting to think about it. "I'd never forgive myself."

"I know very well that is not an exaggeration," Hannibal whispered, and kissed Will's head, then rubbed his back with one palm.

Will just sat there in Hannibal's lap for a few minutes letting himself drift, absorbed in Hannibal, wading. "When did you get so consoling?"

"I spent three years without you," Hannibal said, simply, and brushed his fingertips over the soft back of Will's neck.

"It's strange," Will said, honestly, but not with complaint, but with affection. Hannibal had always showed his own affection and love in different ways, neither of them had been very touchy feely.

"I always wanted to comfort you this way," Hannibal murmured. "It's a primal urge I had never felt with anyone before, to pull them into my arms and hold them when they were distressed..."

Will sighed, kissing the side of Hannibal's neck, lucky that the man didn't feel the need to withdraw from him because of his situation with his wife and stepson. Will didn't know what he would do if Hannibal just suddenly didn't want to talk to him.

Not that he wouldn't deserve it, he really thought he did.

"It's strange to have the comfort without the knowledge you might try to gut me."

Hannibal smiled a little, not offended, and drew his fingers through Will's hair. "I don't feel the need to make you hurt," Hannibal said.

"Not anymore?" Will asked, sitting straight, but close, so he was looking down into Hannibal's eyes.

"You are not planning to turn me over to the FBI after I leave this place, you are not stringing me along to gain my help on the case only to leave me when it is solved ..." Hannibal said. "I would only hurt you if you hurt me first, Will."

"Hurting you would be... impossible at this point," Will said, scratching his fingers down Hannibal's neck lightly. "I'd have to hurt myself first."

Hannibal tilted his head to the side, letting Will scratch him with a deep, deep sigh of satisfaction and kissed the underside of Will's jaw. "I'd advise strongly against that."

"I didn't say I was going to," Will replied, tilting his head back as Hannibal did that, eyes closed. How could ever think about hurting Hannibal *now* ?

Once upon a time, he had tried, he had *wanted* to, the angry in him for what Hannibal had done to him was... irrefutable. But the closer they got, and the more Hannibal understood him and his whims, the more Will realized that he hadn't a mean bone in his body for Hannibal outside of sex.

"I know, historically, however, you have not let hurting yourself stop you," Hannibal murmured, eyes closed."I'd rather you didn't do that."

"I've never intentionally hurt myself," Will reiterated. He didn't take the best care of himself, or put himself first, no, but he had never had the thought of offing himself either.

No, that was a lie. He's had the thought, he has just never acted on it.

"No?" Hannibal asked, softly, still holding Will, stroking fingers through his curls, and down the back of his neck as they talked.

Will offered Hannibal a weak smile, feet touching the floor on either side of him, just the tips of his boots. "There was a time after you left to Italy where I thought about it, finishing what you started, but... I never did it. I didn't think you'd actually care, so what would the point be? Other than to end my misery."

Hannibal heaved a heavy sigh. "I have privately held the unpopular opinion that suicide is not always a terrible choice," Hannibal mused, holding Will more tightly. "We live in an enlightened age for purely physical disease, but we are still very much in the dark ages when it comes to understanding, let alone treating and curing true mental illness. The number of disorders that are actually treatable are slim, to say the least. Should a patient with schizophrenia decide their suffering and bleak prognosis outweighs hope of ever living a tolerable life, I think it is unethical to say they cannot end it."

He looked at Will. "But I don't believe that is your reality, and if I had heard that, I would have been very surprised, and devastated."

"You had left me gutted, emotionally and physically. It took me months on that boat to figure it out." Will stroked his fingers down Hannibal's neck and into his hair again. "It was like having a limb ripped off and being told I couldn't sew it back on again."

"I felt the same way," Hannibal whispered to Will. "In my own way, I became self-destructive for the first time in my life. I simply did not care for freedom without you. It felt empty."

"You were... easier to find than you should have been," Will admitted, with an uneasy smile, aware that was how Alana had found him for Mason.

Hannibal just shrugged, and looked at Will. "I was conflicted. Rationally, I knew I should disappear, but I feared disappearing would mean the hope of you coming for me would also disappear."

"I sailed across the ocean in the winter to find you," he said, with a chuckle, still not sure what spurred him on to do that. "I wish I made better choices when I got there."

"We might have left from there," Hannibal mused. "Ventured back for the dogs, and left with them," he said, with a little smile.

Will hunched, forehead to forehead with Hannibal again, enjoying their newfound closeness, like two halves of a coin. "Taken the boat," he chuckled, hands down Hannibal's arms, to his fingers, carding each digits between the others.

"The Nola," Hannibal smiled, and laced his fingers in with Will's thinking of the recently re-purchased boat.

"She was a simple boat, but very well equipped." Will kissed Hannibal, softly. "Comfortable enough for you and me, and the dogs... at least for a while."

"Yes, I know," Hannibal said with a mysterious smile. "Very well-built and solid, even compared to boats with factory original parts."

Will canted his head, pulling back to address Hannibal, gazing at him, analyzing. "What did you do?"

Hannibal just gave Will his most charming innocent expression. "What are you insinuating I've done, Mr. Graham?"

Will narrowed his eyes, though playful enough. "You bought my boat back."

Hannibal set Will on his feet, then went to his bed, and undid a seam on his pillow to retrieve a small cotton bag. He replaced his pillow and walked back to Will, opening the bag and giving him a set of boat keys. "She is in the Baltimore harbor, key 46. Should you feel unsafe sleeping at home, take Imago, stay there."

Will watched, not sure if he believed the words that came from his mouth, but in fact Hannibal had just made them true. He held out his hand and took the keys, utterly shocked and a little broken. "You... bought my boat."

Hannibal's dark eyes shone up at Will, and he nodded. "Building her and sailing to me is the grandest romantic gesture anyone has ever performed, for my sake. I could never allow anyone else to own her."

Will looked at the keys in his hand, sighing heavily, obviously trying to keep his own emotions over it in check. He'd sold the boat to lock away everything else that had ever been a part of his life that had to with Hannibal, and now he had it back. "Thank you."

Hannibal watched Will struggle with his feelings, and knew without Will saying anything how much that gesture meant to him. "I cannot wait to meet her, and see how sea-worthy she is in person," he said, with a kiss, promising someday that they would re-write Will's voyage, but this time do it properly: with all the pieces of Will's heart aboard.

Will sunk the keys into his pocket, and wound his arms around Hannibal's shoulders, and kissed him properly for it.

Hannibal kissed Will back, deeply, and passionately. The boat had been very, very expensive. He'd had it towed back to the states, not trusting anyone but Will to actually sail her. But this kiss made it worth it. "Please stay there as much as you can, if you are not sleeping here, sleep there."

The harbor was close, and it would make it cheaper than staying in a hotel if he couldn't be here with Hannibal.

"I will." Will didn't catch right away that Hannibal was, if anything, a little worried sounding, as he hid it well enough.

Hannibal sighed and hugged Will to him, protectively, like he was wrapping his whole self around Will. "If you ever hear I've left this place suddenly, I'll be waiting there. The boat is under the name Lloyd Wyman."

"Lloyd Wyman," Will repeated, filing it to memory, which he did very well. This sounded more like a fool proof plan than their last attempt, and this time Will would be ready.

"Everything is ready for you, and the dogs. You need not worry," Hannibal smiled, and kissed Will again. "Why did you have so many packages of *noodles* ?"

"Noodles?" Will asked, and then a light clicked, and his eyes lightened, a small smile on his face. "Surprised the new owner left them there. It's what I ate."

Hannibal made a face at that, like Will just told him something ... awful. "That is *not* food."

"It was for me. I caught fish now and then, but if nothing was biting, I had to live long enough to get to you," Will explained with a fond smile.

Hannibal just wrinkled his aristocratic nose and gave Will a bewildered look. "Is this normal among sailors or another aspect of your self-destructive thoughts? Do you understand how much salt is in one package? Barney brought one to me."

"Yes, I know. I don't use the flavor packets," Will said, rolling his eyes at Hannibal. "I had canned foods too. Those went pretty quick though."

"My only request on the boat is that we will eat food that should not contain a health advisory," Hannibal muttered.

Will huffed a sigh, but was clearly amused and smiling. "No ramen or spam, I promise."

"Please, Will, whatever you do, do not tell me what ... spam is," he sighed. "I can only guess."

"It's disgusting," Will chuckled, and kissed Hannibal's lips quickly. "I won't tell you, you'll never sleep again."

Hannibal gave a little shudder, and then let out a long, calming sigh. "If you are the captain, I will happily be NOLA's chef."

"I can agree to that," Will whispered, a smile on his face that seemed so permanent when he was with Hannibal.

Hannibal smiled back, mostly with his eyes, as he usually did, and kissed Will as he cupped his face with both hands. "When is the next full moon?"

"Tomorrow," Will said, a tad tense about the mention of it, it felt like an impending werewolf attack.

Hannibal sighed through his long, straight nose, and hugged Will to him again. "Would you consider leaving with me tonight?"

Will furrowed his brow, aware that Hannibal wanted out, but Will had to an obligation to catch this murderer. "Hannibal..." he reasoned, quietly, blue eyes on amber ones.

Hannibal cupped Will's face and looked at him, intensely, wordless for a moment. "Will, please. This killer is one that needs to be caught by those he cannot infect with the sickness that infects him. There will be other chances to help people, but I am imploring you as someone who loves you above all else to step away from this."

This was where Will knew that his life with Molly ended, because she pushed where Hannibal pulled, even if Will wasn't a willing participant in either direction right now. "No one is going to catch him. You know that. He'll kill so many more before they do..."

Hannibal took a deep breath, and sighed as he looked at Will. His *stubborn* Will Graham. "What will happen if you catch this illness that is possessing our killer? How many might you kill? How much more capable might you become?"

"Isn't that what you wanted?" Will asked, quiet and reserved, but honest and open at the same time. "To... become more capable."

"I wished for you to acknowledge your darkness, to revel in it as I do," Hannibal said, and shook his head. "This is not simply darkness, and this is not *your* darkness, this way lies *madness* , Will. Madness the likes of which you have never encountered."

Will took in a breath, long and hard feeling in his chest as Hannibal spoke, watching the concern in his eyes, feeling the way it rolled off his him, almost suffocatingly. "I'll catch him before that happens."

"Are you certain of that?" Hannibal asked, with a shift of his jaw. He had seen the crime scene photos, read the reports that Barney acquired for him.

"Do you trust my abilities?" Will asked, worming in closer to Hannibal, hands on the lapels of his jumpsuit.

"I trust your abilities, Will. I trust them *wholeheartedly* and it is precisely my faith in them that makes me fear for you," Hannibal pointed out. "I have told you that I do not consider psychopaths insane, I do not consider what you and I are insane, either, Will, because we are not. But this new killer ... what lives in him is insanity."

"A split personality." Will sighed, and smoothed his hands over Hannibal's chest, looking at his fingers as he did.

"What do you know of them?" Hannibal asked Will, watching Will watch his fingers.

"Not much, to be honest. Read a bit up on them, more of a.. dissociative disorder than anything. I don't think I can *catch* a mental disorder, Hannibal."

"Most people cannot," Hannibal said, with a soft shake of his head. "But you are not most people, Will."

"It's a mental state of being, not a feeling," Will said, though even he knew that wasn't entirely true. He'd already been to one crime scene, and going back into reliving a murderer's crime had literally shaken him to the core.

"You are malleable, and what takes up residence in your mind during a case does not always let go easily, in this case, if at all," Hannibal said.

"Then I guess I hope that we end this soon." Will met Hannibal's eyes again, his own worn and tired, sleepless.

Hannibal shifted his jaw, and walked Will over to his bed against the wall, then pulled back the covers for him."I think some sleep might do you good."

"I don't want to sleep, Hannibal," Will said, but didn't resist the pull and tug, and movement the other man made for him, and sat down, looking up at him.

Hannibal sat next to Will on the bed, and wrapped one arm around him, keeping him close. "When do you ever?"

Will leaned his head against Hannibal's shoulder, nuzzling against him, shifting to get comfortable. "For a few years I slept fine. Better than fine,I slept... better. Not now though."

"For my own peace of mind, will you allow me to test a hypothesis?" Hannibal asked, softly, rubbing the side of Will's arm.

"And what is that?" Will asked, allowing the comfort from Hannibal that he shoved away for year, even when they *were* talking.

"You began losing sleep when I came back into your life, you slept well when I was away from you," Hannibal murmured. "I'd like to exclude my presence as the sole cause of your insomnia."

"I'm having nightmares about the case, not you," Will said, quietly, lifting his head to look at Hannibal, like he was asking Will to tear off his arm.

Hannibal laid down in the narrow, but surprisingly soft and comfortable bed, after he removed his shoes. He held his arm out to Will, offering a place with him. "I may also have admired you while you slept on the couch when you were here last, and wished I could be there with you."

Will kicked off his boots and and scooted between the wall and Hannibal, and curled up next to him, laying his head between where Hannibal's shoulder and chest met, broad and expansive, finding he fit there perfectly. Wrapping one arm around Hannibal's slim waist, he curled one leg around his. "You might find that you soothe me, Doctor Lecter."

"As music calms the savage beast?" Hannibal asked with a slight smile at the feeling of Will curling up with him like this, and thought of Wolftrap again, of Will snuggling in against him when he was wounded and drugged. A feeling of pride swelled in Hannibal's chest when Will settled his head over it, and he tugged the soft blanket up over them both, joined by Imago, who curled up behind Will's knees. "Imagine this, on a boat rocking gently on the ocean."

"Quiet, with salty smelling winds coming through the small window," Will added, quietly, eyes closed, though not as tired as he looked, he was calm.

"I have never spent time on the ocean, always at the shore, or flying over it," Hannibal mused and smiled at Will as he relaxed. "I think of it, now, as your homeland, as strange as that may be. The sea, like you, is vast and difficult to quantify, capable of changes and violence, or incredible beauty."

"You will grow to love it. You don't have a weak stomach, do you?" Will teased, softly, fingers splayed over Hannibal's stomach, toying with the zipper line.

Hannibal laughed aloud, and shook his head. "I am certain that I will be able to tolerate or at least adapt to the motion of a boat," he assured Will, and took a deep breath, which made his stomach rise under Will's fingers.

Though Will came in prepared for another night like the other days ago, he was content with this, talking and snuggling up the way lovers did. In ways that he never thought they would actually ever be.

Content.

"Hope you like fish a lot."

"Not as much as some other meats, but I am always eager for a culinary challenge," Hannibal murmured, and kissed Will's forehead. "No casserole."

"I don't want more casserole," Will groaned, leaning his face into Hannibal's neck, a smile gracing his lips.

"It's only marginally better than your noodles. Please, Will, no more eating food intended only to be served on space flight missions," Hannibal muttered.

"Whatever you say, Hannibal," the fisherman whispered, lips ghosting over his pulse.

Hannibal smiled, and tipped his head back at that, basking like a cat in Will's affection. "I love you," he heard himself say, almost surprised that he had. It just ... tumbled out of his mouth.

It was not the first time they shared their emotions outwardly, with words, but the way it happened to come out of Hannibal's mouth was all together heart stopping to Will, and he all but preened in the adoration that rolled off Hannibal.

"I love you, too," he said, promising it with another kiss to his throat and then his jaw.

Hannibal wasn't used to things falling from his lips, un-considered, un-deliberately. Everything he did had a conscious, controlled style to it, and only around Will did that seem to go out the window.

He sighed, happily, to hear the words from Will, and tilted his head down to kiss Will's lips, instead of just being kissed.

Will moved, more to his side, and wrapped his arm up and Hannibal's back, and clutched his shoulder with one hand, kissing him in return, slowly, sweetly. It wasn't anything he thought he ever deserved, but then suddenly, it was.

Hannibal pressed Will against the wall with the kiss, his heart beating faster as Will clutched him like that. He loved having Will here, in bed with him, there was something permanent and domestic about it.

Will groaned at the closeness, tugging Hannibal in, and kissed him harder, trapping himself against the wall.

Hannibal moaned quietly, and tilted his head to stroke his tongue over Will's, then wrapped one arm around his waist and slid his long leg over Will's hip.

It felt a lot better than anything like this should, and he knew guilt was something he should feel, it want there. This was right, this was perfect.

"Hannibal," Will murmured against his mouth, stroking his tongue wide against the doctor's.

Hannibal sighed, and ran his hands down Will's back and side, completely and utterly absorbed in the moment.

He could still taste the dessert and wine on Will's lips, and on his tongue, and sucked at Will's tongue, gently, then sucked his lower lip.

He sighed into the kiss, holding on to Hannibal tighter, passionately kissing him.

Hannibal pinned Will right against the wall, like he was trying to escape, and undid his shirt, button by button as he kissed his jaw, then down his neck, biting at Will's skin, marking him again.

Will was hardly a pushover, but Hannibal holding him like that, wantonly, made him melt and give up any resistance he might have had. He unzipped Hannibal's jumpsuit to his stomach, and palming one hand up his chest.

Hannibal undid another button and another, and hummed against Will's chest as he bit his way down, leaving red and plum colored bite marks in his wake everywhere below Will's

collar line.

"Will-" he whispered, and shrugged the top of the jumpsuit off.

They went from sweet and sincere, to cuddling, to /this/ in a matter of minutes; it almost made his head spin, light headed like whiplash.

He smoothed his hand over Hannibal's chest, thumb over a nipple, and then pinched it. He shrugged his shirt off, tossing it over the side of the small bed.

Will made Hannibal want to cherish him, and he made Hannibal want to ravage him, too. Right now, his simmering jealousy over the wife Will was hesitant to leave drove him on, leaving unmistakable marks on his chest and stomach before he sucked Will's nipple, and then clamped his teeth over it.

Will hissed at that, aware he'd have a lot more trouble hiding these for much longer.

He clutched the back of Hannibal's head, settling under him as he moved their bodies.

Hannibal knew very well that the moment Will opened his shirt, his wife would see, and the animal in Hannibal didn't want Will undressing around anyone else.

He sucked and bit Will's nipple, working the sensitive nerves over between his teeth until it was throbbing, then bit deeply, over Will's heart, and unzipped Will's pants.

"Hannibal-" Will gasped, the bite aching, but he grasped Hannibal's hair so that he bit over his heart *harder* , wanting the reminder.

Hannibal growled, low in his chest, and bit harder, hard enough to draw some blood and leave deep tooth prints in Will's skin, then licked the cuts, slowly. "Mine."

It would probably scar, but Will was counting on that, another to match all the others that Hannibal had given him over the years. "Mm..." he groaned.

Hannibal bit it again, deepening and blurring the lines a little. He worked Will's cock over under his palm, giving him pleasure and pain at the same time.

Will gripped Hannibal's shoulders, nails digging into his skin, hips rising to meet his fist, sliding in against his fingers and palm. "Hannibal-"

Hannibal licked Will's bleeding wound again, and roved down, biting and kissing his stomach, his sides as he yanked his pants and boxers off, then ground his teeth possessively over the bone there.

Another hiss from Will, which turned into a lazy growl of approval. "Trying to maim me?" he almost laughed, choking it down with a groan.

Hannibal took Will's cock in hand, and stroked him as he raised his head, eyes a dangerous, dark shade. "Merely marking *my* territory," he whispered.

Will leaned up on his elbows to watch Hannibal, and the purpling, bleeding marks he left all down his torso. "Might as well just tattoo it on my ass..."

"Since you mentioned it," Hannibal smirked, and rolled Will over to bite the back of his shoulder, then kissed his way down his spine to the round of Will's ass, biting and sucking the firm muscle there.

Will turned, if only because he wanted to feel those teeth *everywhere* , and groaned into the bedsheets, rutting a little into the mattress.

Hannibal slapped the other cheek and bit the back of Will's thigh, then flickered the tip of his tongue against the tiny slip of skin behind Will's balls. "Spread ..." he ordered.

Will spread his thighs, one leg dropping to the side of the bed to compensate, and pushed his ass into the air to further the motion. He bit his bottom lip, not looking back at Hannibal, the position almost embarrassing, but he's too turned on to care.

Hannibal found the view of Will's spread ass anything *but* embarrassing, and laid down between Will's bitten thighs, rubbing them with his hands, which slid up to Will's ass, kneading the muscle. "You do have the *perfect* behind..."

Will rolled his eyes, now looking at Hannibal over his shoulder. He'd never had this much attention paid to his back end before. "What every man dreams of hearing..."

Hannibal gave Will's ass a sharp slap with one hand and reached around him, gripping Will's cock as he gave his pink cheek another bite, then teased Will's entrance with his tongue.

Will bit his tongue after the comment earned him a spank, and moaned instead as Hannibal's tongue probed his ass like that, making every nerve in his body feel electrified.

Hannibal drew back, with a smirk, and rubbed one hand over Will's ass. "I can always stop if you want..."

Will just gave Hannibal a look, eyes narrowed over his shoulder, and then pressed his ass into Hannibal's tongue, as if to prove he didn't mind at all.

Hannibal closed his eyes and spread Will with his tongue, teasing him with it before he threw himself into the act, reveling in the way Will squirmed.

And Will did squirm, toes stretching into the air, his body tense but relaxed, his cock rubbing on the sheets below him, begging for friction. "Ohgod-"

Hannibal plunged his tongue in deeper, spreading and wetting Will, torturing his nerves from the inside out as he squeezed Will's bruised cheeks at the same time. "Mmmhmm."

Hannibal seemed to enjoy doing this, like some kind of supplement to actually eating Will. He wouldn't complain, it wasn't his brain at least. "Please-" he begged.

"Please what?" Hannibal breathed against Will, and slipped two fingers into him with a pleased groan as he moved closer.

That elicited a moan from the otherwise quiet man, one he tried to to stifle with his fist. "Hannibal, *please* ."

"Please *what* , Will? I'd like to hear you say it," Hannibal said with maddening patience while he twisted and plunged his long fingers into Will's ass.

Will panted, and pressed back into Hannibal's fingers, a soft whine edging into his voice that made it hard to control how desperate he sounded. "Fuck me. Please."

Hannibal's eyes closed, like he was savouring beautiful music when Will sounded that way. He removed his probing fingers, and yanked Will's slim hips back,with both hands, having grabbed oil he used with their meal earlier, he slicked himself with it. Hannibal pressed his cock into Will, maddeningly slowly, letting Will's body stretch and strain to take him in.

Will panted hard against the mattress, and reared up on his knees and elbows, and pressed back, arched, taking Hannibal in to the hilt with a groan.

"There-" Hannibal moaned, staring down at the way Will's back flexed when he drove himself in, filling Will completely, then almost pulling out of him before he thrust in again.

Will let out a grunt as Hannibal drove deep into him, with each thrust, fingers clamped into the blanket, head bowed, sweat slicked down his neck.

Will was just as beautiful like this as he was any of the other times they'd had sex. He was perfect, from every angle.

Hannibal stared at the sight of his own cock sinking deep into Will, noting the way his hips turned Will's ass pink with every slap, and the way Will gripped the sheets. "I want to smell you like this every time I lay in bed..."

Oh God. And Hannibal would. He'd smell the horrible aftershave, the sweat, the come... Will groaned at the thought, and touched a hand to his cock, stroking it with a groan.

"And every time you sit down-" Hannibal growled, fucking Will harder when he touched himself. "I want you to feel me."

"Have," Will sputtered out, huffing a chuckle as Hannibal made it more on point that he would feel it even more now. "Harder then."

Like he was just waiting for Will to say that, Hannibal started to fuck Will, violently, ravaging him from behind so hard and fast that speaking was impossible.

Will shook and trembled under the mounting and fucking he was taking, all but pressed down into the mattress, his chest to it, ass up ravaged. "Ha-" he couldn't get out the name, as it slipped into groan.

Hannibal's nails started to bite into Will's hips, carving bloody crescent moons into his skin as he hammered inside him relentlessly. A wordless, savage groan bubbled up in Hannibal's throat, building as he began to climax, burning from head to toe.

Obscene curses came from Will's mouth as he felt himself fucked right out of his senses, able to *feel* Hannibal ravage need on top of his own to be taken and claimed. He spilled into his hand, down it and onto the blankets, grunting and moaning.

Hannibal crumbled when he felt Will pulse and spill, and drilled his cock against Will's prostate as he came, hard enough to make his strong thighs shake, and his head bow, mouth dropped open.

Hannibal planted one palm in the bed next to Will's shoulder, bracing himself as they both panted for breath.

Will laughed a little as he collapsed, Hannibal over him, and managed to look back at him, and kiss him a little. "You break me apart from the inside out."

"I always put you back together afterward," Hannibal breathed, and kissed Will, laying on the bed to curl up with him, spooning him from behind.

"This time," Will whispered, snuggling into Hannibal, both naked and sweaty, but he enjoyed this sort of afterglow, it was intimate.

"This time," Hannibal whispered, against Will's neck, and kissed the back of his shoulder, meaning that he would *every* time.

Will knew the risks of loving someone like Hannibal, that he could be being played, that he could be feeding into a trap, another one, but their connection made it impossible to not *want* from the other man.

Or to love him. Will had loved him for a while, and it just grew even in their distance.

"Good."

Likewise, Hannibal found it impossible to resist Will, even if he could be leading him into yet another trap.

He kissed the sweaty back of his neck again, and looked at all the dark bite marks all over Will's body. "I've mauled you."

"Mm," Will sighed, leaning his head against Hannibal's arm, nuzzling it. "You did."

Hannibal brushed his fingers over the red and purple marks, lovingly, especially the one over Will's heart, deeper than the rest. "I'd apologize, but I would not mean it."

"I don't want your half hearted apologies anyway," Will murmured, putting his hand over Hannibal's, over his heart, and pressed on it.

Hannibal chuckled, and nuzzled his nose into Will's hair with a sigh. "Only my full-hearted ones?"

"Yes. Those you mean," Will whispered, turning his head a little to look at Hannibal.

"They are few, and far between, but you are the only one worth making them for," Hannibal whispered and stared at Will's deep blue eyes when he looked back at him.

"So far, I've only gotten the one, but I'll take it," Will said, knowing that Hannibal would never apologize for anything else he'd done to him because he didn't feel bad about it.

"I hope never to need to apologize to you again," Hannibal whispered, sincerely, snuggled up behind Will, able to feel his own heart pounding.

"I hope that too," Will said, very quietly, wanting to turn to look at Hannibal, but he was content like this.

"I don't intend to make the same mistake," Hannibal said, quietly, and nuzzled the skin just behind Will's ear, then took his hand, lacing their fingers together. "I've dreamed about you."

"Dreamed about me?" Will asked, snuggling in closer, letting his eyes close.

Hannibal nodded, and pulled the blanket up around them both. Imago jumped on the bed again, snuggling behind Hannibal's knees this time.

He never imagined there would be a day he wanted a dog to sleep on the bed with him ... but then Will happened.

"About you, and this case."

"And?" Will was afraid to hear what Hannibal had to say, if it would be more of him trying to dissuade him from keeping the case.

Hannibal didn't say anything for a moment, just held Will in his arms. "It ends in blood. Yours."

"It's just a dream, Hannibal," Will replied, just as quiet, but matter of fact.

"I do not usually dream," Hannibal said, quietly.

"So when you do it's a premonition?" Will turned his face enough to look at Hannibal's sharp features, cut so defined and so prominent with his hair this short.

"Not at all, nothing so mystical," Hannibal said, looking back at Will, who was still flushed and tousled. "Our dreams serve to show us our mind's unfinished business, it's outstanding accounts that we haven't settled during the day."

"So what do you suppose that one is telling you?" Will asked, turning so he could see Hannibal completely, but pressed himself could, still wrapped in his arms.

"That I am worried about you," Hannibal said,simply and honestly. "So worried that I continue to worry in my sleep. It is most unlike me."

"Please don't worry about me," Will whispered, covering Hannibal's mouth with a kiss, able to taste himself there still.

"I can't," Hannibal sighed, unused to saying those words, about anything. He kissed Will back, one hand cupping the back of his head.

Will had told Alana something similar when he had first come to see Hannibal, and that he wouldn't let Hannibal in, and look what happened there.

Will hoped that this was a better assumptions, that he would be fine. "Try."

"I am not failing for lack of effort," Hannibal sighed.

"I'll be fine," Will reassured, a whisper and then another kiss, this one deeper, and promising.

Hannibal couldn't help but kiss Will back, slowly and deeply, wishing he could believe Will's words. "There is nothing I can say to dissuade you?"

"Not unless you know something I do not," Will said, hoping Hannibal wasn't holding out on him.

Hannibal shook his head. "I know what you know," Hannibal said, quietly, and realized he may have to take matters into his own hands.

Will roved his hands over Hannibal's chest, to his shoulders, resting their heads together. "And you'll continue to know what I know. We'll do this together."

Hannibal nodded, and curled his arms around Will's back, looking at him up close. "No luck at the photo labs, I assume?"

"Nothing around here, we'll need to extend our search out, no saying he's nearby, he could drive out... of the way."

"If he's smart, that is precisely what he will do, of course that takes time, he would have to take time away from work to accomplish that..."

"Most people get two days off..." Will shook his head, sinking back into work mode, shrugging. "It is a Friday for the full moon. He might work a nine to five, or take off time if he needed to. Maybe he doesn't sleep, and it doesn't matter."

The latter seemed... right.

"He could run on adrenaline for days after," Hannibal said. "These kills *excite* him, they are not clinical. They would arouse his passion."

"Arouse something," Will agreed, and rested his head on Hannibal's arm, contently.

Hannibal tugged Will closer to him, one hand over the back of his head, fingers in his soft hair. If he had to confront the killer himself, if he had to draw him out, away from Will ... he would. "Can you sleep? Or have I aroused your passion too vigorously?"

"Mm," Will sighed, and pushed his nose in against Hannibal's neck. "Afraid to wake and find you gone."

Hannibal closed his eyes with a little smile. "I can guarantee that is not about to happen here."

Will worried he'd wake and be in his own bed, back home, stuck in a life he once thought made him happy. "I know."

"You will wake up with me in this bed," Hannibal promised, and wished Will had been happy to see him when he woke in Wolf Trap years ago.

Will had been through an ordeal and a half to get across the world to find the man he loved, only to be confused and lost, and persuaded each and every way, and then have his brain cut into.

Then his face.

He had been done three years ago, he didn't think he could mentally *do* it.

Will let his breath even out, and kissed the side of Hannibal's neck, taking deep breaths.

Hannibal stroked his hand through Will's hair, cradling him close as he started to take deeper and deeper breaths. "I love you, Will," he whispered, again.

Chapter 3

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

It was late, early into the morning, and Will had come from a crime scene, a fresh one, with blood everywhere. A family, two parents and a little girl: dead. Jack had told him not to go to Hannibal right away, but Will wasn't exactly in the right mindset, still smelling blood that was as fresh as when it was let out. Barney had let him in, where Hannibal had the two dogs: Imago and a new one that Will took from a family that died before.

Hannibal sat at his desk, writing, and looked up when Will came in. The new dog was curled up on Hannibal's feet, and Imago slept in his lap as Hannibal petted him, slowly.

He set Imago down, gently, and walked toward the glass when Will came in, able to smell the blood-scent that clung to Will's clothes and hair.

"Barney, please let Mr. Graham in," Hannibal said, before Barney shut the door.

The nurse stepped back in, and went to the glass door, opening it with the keys for Will. "I'm gonna assume you'd sign the waiver…"

Will didn't even look at Barney, hell he wasn't even looking at Hannibal, he was looking through him. He hadn't called Molly, he didn't want to, he didn't go to the boat, he couldn't. There was only one person who could ground him back to reality.

Barney held the door open and Hannibal walked through to Will, not waiting for Will to come to him. Barney opened his mouth to protest but shut it again when he saw the urgency in Dr. Lecter's eyes.

"Will ..." Hannibal said, and took Will's shoulders in his hands, looking at him. "Will, look at me, please."

Will's eyes seemed to refocus then, on Hannibal. He'd driven himself to the one place he knew he could be, just as he used to when he was very sick, and knew Hannibal would help him. It was dark and dangerous in the mind of the killer he was after, split and fragmented, shy but not innocent. Not at all.

Will leaned and rested his forehead against Hannibal's, but didn't touch him, anywhere else, still able to see the blood on his hands, all over himself, like a living nightmare.

Only it wasn't really there.

"A glass of cold water with ice in it, please, Barney," Hannibal said, ignoring the open door completely while he walked Will into his cell and sat with him on the neatly made bed while the dogs watched.

Barney looked between Hannibal, and the door, and did as he was asked, closing the door after him.

"Will," Hannibal said softly, and cupped Will's face with one hand, holding his gaze. "I would like you to focus on the sound of my voice. You have become lost in the woods of your mind, but my voice is a light shining through the trees. Follow it back to yourself, you can do it."

Will's eyes stayed on Hannibal's and though he didn't want to sit or taint the luxury bedding he was sure he was sitting on, imagining it was Hannibal's home in Boston, he let the man settle him in anyway.

After a few minutes his eyes seemed more alive, and more aware, blinking as he looked at Hannibal, confusion evident. "Hannibal?"

Hannibal kept talking to Will, repeating the words in a comforting tone over and over like a message sent out to sea to a lost sailor over the airwaves. He nodded, the glass of water near his hand, the glass door shut, dogs near Will's feet.

"There you are, Will," he whispered, with concern in his eyes, and tucked some of Will's hair behind his ear. "You were in a state."

Will was shaking a little, and reached for the glass of water, bringing it to his lips. He drained it completely, throat dry and horse. "A..." he swallowed around his tongue, feeling heavy. "A state?"

Hannibal nodded, and let Will drink, maintaining contact with one hand on Will's shoulder as he did, one hand against his free wrist, taking Will's pulse. "A dissociative state. You've lost time. What is the last thing you remember?"

Will sighed, catching his breath like he'd been running, even if he hadn't been. He shook his head.

"That's... impossible." He stopped, because he knew that wasn't true. "I was at the new crime scene. I was doing what I do..."

Hannibal looked at Will's watch, then at Will.

"Your pulse was in the fifties when you walked in," Hannibal informed Will, calmly.

"How did I get here?" Will shifted his jaw, trying to stay leveled. He'd hoped that losing time was just something that happened when he had been very sick.

"I'm not certain," Hannibal said, calmly, and touched Will's cheek again, and took his glasses off for him, setting them aside. "Do you wish to call Jack and ask?"

Will's phone buzzed in his jacket pocket which was now off and at the end of the bed, and he looked at it, almost afraid to know who it was and what he might have said to *anyone* while like that. "No..."

"Who is calling?" Hannibal asked, and looked at the screen.

It was Molly, of course. Hannibal sighed, tempted to answer it *for* Will.

Will just looked at it, jaw set, his thumb over the accept button, not sure if he should. Something felt very off… "It's Molly..."

"Would you like me to say you're working?" Hannibal offered as the phone rang out to message, and then began to ring again, still Molly.

Will couldn't just let other people handle his problems, and he clicked accept this time, and brought the phone to his ear. "Hello?" he asked, voice shaking, still wavering from the episode.

"Will!?" Molly asked into the phone, confused and horrified. "What ... what's going on? Did someone get your phone? Is this a joke, because if it is, it's a sick one."

Will started to shake worse when she spoke, a horrible feeling in his gut, and looked at Hannibal. "No, I've been working, I was at a crime scene... Molly what do you mean?"

"The TEXTS you sent, Will," Molly whispered, voice shaking. "You're ...going to change us? Kill us? What are you talking about? This isn't *funny* ."

Will shook so hard he almost dropped his phone, pulling it from his ear to look at what it was he wrote, bringing the texts up as Molly talked, and stared horrified at them. He brought the phone back to his ear, trying to remain centered.

"Molly... I... want you to take all the dogs except for Buster and Winston and go to your mother's. I'll come get them later. You and Walter aren't safe."

"What ... what is going *on* ..." she sounded like she was crying, and sniffled over the phone, rattled. "I don't *understand* , why would you say those things?"

"It... wasn't me. You know that thing I do that I told you about? I said I'd be different. It's affecting me, and just for now you need to leave and not tell me where you are," Will explained.

Molly was quiet for a moment, and sniffled again. "Okay," she said, in a shaky voice. "Then we'll see you when we see you."

She hung up.

"Yeah," Will said after she hung up and dropped the phone on the bed.

Hannibal sighed, then wrapped his arm around Will, slowly, and squeezed him close. "She'll be safer."

"I texted her horrible things, Hannibal." Will turned his phone over Hannibal, entering his passcode for the screen first, to show him.

"You didn't," Hannibal said, reading the horrific messages with a swipe of his finger. "He did. He got into your head, Will, the sickness driving this killer to slaughter, to claim families for

his own, by transforming them."

Will swallowed; "How long can I continue to blame everyone else for the things that I let him do?"

"You let him in, you can blame yourself to that, but you would never choose to say those things to any woman," Hannibal said, with perfect confidence, and set the phone aside. "Do you see what I am worried about? What he could very easily have done with *your* hands, Will?"

"It's all the more reason to stop him," Will said, stubbornly, hoping this last bit attack would be just that, the last.

"How do you propose to do that?" Hannibal asked. "If you manage to kill this other man, the one so driven to sacrifice families to the dragon on his back, will that remove the shard of him that's entered your mind?"

"How did you know it was a dragon?" Will said, as if some weird secret had been told to just him, and Hannibal had somehow known it.

"I didn't," Hannibal said. "But when I think of a terrible beast with enormous destructive power, a dragon comes to mind. Why do you ask?"

Will frowned for a moment, and shook his head. "A feeling. A Notion. A... dragon."

"The image of a dragon?" Hannibal asked, softly, taking Will's instincts about this very, very seriously.

"Yes." Will couldn't explain it, but there was a vision of a dragon in his mind, trying to break free.

"What can you tell me about this dragon? What does he want?" Hannibal asked, hoping to get Will talking, get it out of him so that he could rest.

"To change his vessel. to punish him, to make him see he's not weak," Will said, not looking at Hannibal.

"Is that also what he wants with you?" Hannibal asked, with a dark tone in his voice, like he was dreading the answer, but already knew it at the same time.

"I don't know, is it?" Will turned to his head to Hannibal, eyes darker, narrowed on Hannibal. "What do you think, Doctor Lecter?"

Hannibal looked at Will with interest, focusing on his eyes, and the way he move. "I think perhaps I am no longer speaking to Will."

"Does that bother you?" He looked around, then back at Hannibal with keening, but lowered interest.

"No," Hannibal said, calmly. "I am long since used to darkness and madness, having helped Will become acquainted with his own. What shall I call you?"

He didn't answer, he just stood, and walked around the the cell, as if trying to figure something out, and then looked back over his shoulder at Lecter. "You've been here three years. Why?"

"I have been waiting," Hannibal said, watching this new part of Will pace around the cell while the dogs chose to stay with /him/ this time, watching from behind him.

"For Will? That's pathetic, almost as much as he is, don't you think, doctor?"

"It is a mistake to underestimate the power of a choice," Hannibal said."Forcing Will into being with me, keeping him hypnotically and chemically bound would mean almost nothing. All it would prove is my ability to overpower him, something of which I am already assured. Teaching Will to *chose* to be with me creates a much more permanent result."

"Why would you want a man who can't even leave his mousey little wife and son for you? I think I probably did you both a favor in threatening to kill her and her son."

Hannibal smiled a little at that, and stood up, giving Imago a comforting pat as he walked toward the stranger in Will's body. "No one can appreciate the impulse to dispatch them both more than I," Hannibal said with a nod and a chuckle. "But you must consider the long-game, as it were. After you, or I kill them to help Will rid himself of their cloying normalcy ... what then? We would martyr them, turn them into saints instead of what they really are ... unnecessary baggage. Death would immortalize them forever in his mind, elevate his feelings for them from tolerance and like to ardent love. It seems an unwise action to take."

"And that would be too complicating for you, wouldn't it, Doctor Lecter? You've finally got Will where you want him, played right into your hands, needing and wanting, You'd lose him if the woman and boy were killed, and then what would happen to you?" He looked around their confinement "He's basically crawled in here with you."

"Losing him is not a circumstance I am prepared to anticipate," Hannibal said, watching the stranger look around. "This is a temporary home for the moment. It serves me well, Will feels he can find me here, always, if we push a bird from the nest before he is ready to take flight, he falls to his death. Tell me stranger, what will happen to you if Will falls to his death?"

"You still deal with me elsewhere. No harm is coming to Will though unless I need it to," Will said, darkly, turning to look at Lecter. "How can you say he loves you when you've been conditioning him since the day you met? Manipulative don't you think?"

"There is no love, save for that between a parent and child, that does not grow with some prompting. My courting of Will was less traditional, actual hearts and a shared capacity for darkness instead of flowers and candy, but the important thing is, he has chosen me, over and over, and I have chosen him from the very beginning."

"That will be your ruin." Will's phone rang again, and the man went over to look at it. Jack Crawford. He should really let Will handle this. He answered it.

Will sat down on the bed, eyes light and blue again, clear. He looked confused though, but held the phone to his ear. "Hey... Jack?"

"Will?" Jack asked, in a strident, brisk voice, booming even over the phone. Imago licked Will, excitedly, happy to recognize him again, and crawled into his lap.

"Where the HELL are you?"

Will hugged one arm around the wolf pup, shaking as he looked at Hannibal, confused and lost. "I... am with Hannibal right now..."

Jack sighed, and held the phone away from himself for a moment, calming down.

"You took off in the middle of the crime scene, you said nothing, you looked awful according to Price, and I doubt Hannibal's cell is the place you need to be at the moment."

"I lost time, Jack..." Will said, steadily, fingers deep in Imago's fur. "This is where I ended up."

"Okay," Jack said, calming down. "Are you alright? You're ... back, now? Can you discuss what you saw?"

"It's a split personality. One that is trying to *become* something, a dragon, or a demon. He's trying to take over whoever the host is, destroying the things he wants most. A perfect family."

Hannibal rubbed one hand over Will's back, calming him before he wrapped his arm around Will, holding him close while he talked to Jack.

"So ... DID. We're looking for someone with a history of severe childhood abuse, he has no idea what he's doing ..." Jack said, taking notes. "Can you tell me anything about how to find this guy?"

"Photo and video developing companies. He's picking people he comes across. He thinks himself disfigured too, but it's probably not as bad as he thinks..."

"I'll look into it," Jack sighed. "Can you tell me what sort of deformity?"

"I don't know yet. He's shy because of it, so something facial." Will sighed, leaning into Hannibal.

"Like a scar? Maybe from the abuse?" Jack asked, thoughtfully, getting into his car. "Too shy to get it fixed?"

"He might have but there would still be something there to remind him. Might be birth defect, could be the reason he was abused."

"Cleft palate comes to mind," Hannibal said, softly, into Will's ear.

"Cleft palate, Jack," Will said, giving Hannibal a little smile.

"Cleft palate," Jack said, writing it down to ask Zeller and Price about. "I'll look around, thanks Will. Go *home* ."

“Okay, Jack," Will said and hung up the phone, not liking the tone of Jack's voice. He set the phone down, shifting his jaw. "What happened?"

"The stranger inside you spoke to me," Hannibal said, frankly, and calmly to Will, arm still around him.

"It is as I've feared, you have gone so deeply into this killer's head that you have 'caught' his condition, so to speak."

Will sighed, hands folded together in his lap, hunched over a little. He hadn't meant to slip this far down, but the nightmares and the crime scenes were so vivid now, he could almost *see* the killer... catch him. "We just need to catch him."

"He admitted to threatening Molly and Walter," Hannibal said, and looked at Will with worry in his eyes. "He asked me why I don't want him to kill them."

"And why don't you?" Will asked, staring at his hands that still felt covered in blood. So much blood.

"If I wanted a way to drive you from my life, and immortalize them forever in your heart, that is *exactly* what I would do," Hannibal said, honestly.

"Mmn," Will hummed, chewing his bottom lip, wringing his hands together, anxious and appalled with himself, but he didn't have time to venture into Hannibal's want for Will to stop.

They were *so* close.

Hannibal took Will's hands, and looked at him, into his eyes. "Will, do you understand the implication of what I've told you? You have an *alter* ."

"It'll go away," Will insisted, a side glare over at Hannibal, like he didn't even want to

"Are you certain of that?" Hannibal asked, with a frown, not one to back off just because Will became prickly with him.

"It's a mental condition, and I've not suffered the trauma he has to have it. It's..." Well that wasn't really true, Will had dealt with a lot of PTSD since he met Hannibal, and all the shit he'd been through since."

"You have, Will," Hannibal said, patiently. "You have been through enough trauma, although at a later age, to push you into this sort of dissociative coping mechanism. It happens," Hannibal said, still holding Will's hand. "This is precisely why I did not want you to work on this case."

A lot of that was Hannibal's doing, and Will never got *proper* treatment for what he'd gone through. A shift like this, into the mind of a man who was broken in two, maybe three, who

knew really, would set off his own demons. He didn't want another person in him, whoever it was, and have them around Hannibal, or anyone he knew for that matter.

Will pushed down his own darkness to have a simpler life, and better one, he thought, and now it felt like his darkness was taking a form of it's own since Will didn't want to join him. "A little late now."

Hannibal knew, very clearly, that he was the one who pushed Will into this state. He also knew, intimately, just how damaged Will was, how unsuitable his state was for this particular case.

"Have you told Molly and Walter to flee?"

Will lifted his gaze giving Hannibal a pointed look.

"Did you not hear the phone call?" he asked, though to be fair, perhaps Hannibal was being polite and not listening in. "I told her to take all the dogs but Winston and Buster, and get out. She'll hate me, but it doesn't... matter."

"No, I was not listening to the phone call," Hannibal said with some offense. "That would be incredibly rude."

"She's leaving." Will got up, pacing, rubbing a hand over his face, trying to scrub the idea that someone else was walking with him, living inside his head.

"I see," Hannibal said, unable to bring himself to say that he was sorry. He watched Will pace, and stood with a sigh, remembering the hostility in the alter's voice. "He may try to harm you."

"Harm me?" Will shot Hannibal a quizzical gaze, not expecting /that/.

"He said that no harm was coming to you ... unless he *needed* it to," and the way he said it suggested that he considers you a hostage, more than a host.

"He'd have to kill himself at the same time, Hannibal, I doubt very much he would do that," Will said, though his own tone suggested that he wasn't exactly buying his own words.

"I didn't say kill, I said harm," Hannibal sighed, heavily. "There is a world between the two."

"Still, harming himself in the process," Will said, feeling out of the norm, almost out of body, and was trying to ground himself.

"He might consider it a worthwhile sacrifice," Hannibal said, watching Will. He stepped closer, and offered his hand to him.

Will was on the defense, not sure of what he was capable of, but at least he knew Hannibal could handle himself. Hopefully. "I can't *not.* .. I mean... what would you have me do?"

"Step away. You've given Jack all the information you can, hopefully I can help you close the connection between your mind and this madness that you've tapped into," Hannibal said.

"What if it isn't madness?" Will asked, jaw tight, looking at Hannibal as he finally reached his hand out to take his. "What if it's what you unleashed years ago trying to claw through?"

"I unleashed *you,* " Hannibal said, and closed his hand around Will's, then stepped closer to him, looking at the stress lines on his face close up. "Not this."

"So you think it's evolving." Will was reluctant to get much closer than this, afraid his hands would turn on Hannibal, afraid of what might happen.

"I think that you took on our killer's fears, his insecurities, I think you replicated him so perfectly in your mind in an attempt to find him that you replicated his illness, as well," Hannibal sighed.

"But it's become something else, or have I done it so well, we have to worry about two murderers now?"

"I was never worried that you would not do what Jack wanted you to do to perfection, Will," Hannibal said, looking into Will's eyes, cherishing the color in them.

"I worried you would do as you have done, you would do it too well. I cannot say what your alter may or may not do. He seems to despise me."

Will slid his hands up Hannibal's arms, and then around his shoulders, resting his head against his, able to feel him breath, grounding. "I've gotten too inside his head, just as I have yours."

Hannibal locked his jaw at that. He did not like the thought of someone else in Will's head that way. He swallowed and looked too calm for a moment. "Perhaps he considers me a rival."

Will, though shaken, soothed a hand down the back of Hannibal's neck, and sighed heavily, able to feel the mood change. "You're right, Jack has what he needs..."

"You have all but given him a physical description," Hannibal agreed, tense, and calm at the same time, disliking this series of events.

"I'll leave the case," Will said, quietly, taking a step back, knowing that he was potentially letting the killer go if Jack couldn't find him.

Hannibal felt Will step back, and felt a rare stir of panic in his stomach, his hand closing more tightly around Will's hand. "Thank you."

Will twined their fingers together, palm to palm, and then did the same with their other hands. "I love you. Please know that."

Hannibal's heart did a little jump whenever Will said those words, and he closed his eyes for a second, chin down, then looked at Will, intently. "I love you, too."

Will leaned in again and kissed Hannibal softly, reassuring him. "There's only room for one other in my head, and that's... you."

Hannibal gave a soft, quiet chuckle, and pulled Will to him with both arms, holding him tightly before he kissed him this time, slowly and deeply, then looked into his eyes. "Stay here, tonight."

Will sighed, sure that he should go get the dogs, but he should also give Molly time to get out. "I'll stay..."

Relief wasn't something Hannibal felt often, because there was not much he dreaded, not much he feared, but Will saying he would stay the night was a relief, pure and simple. He let out a sigh, and hugged Will more tightly to him, then rested his head against Will's, nose in his hair. "You seemed to sleep quite well the other night."

"You wore me out," Will said, with a little smile in his voice, and wrapped his arms around Hannibal, double checking his hands for blood first, behind his back.

Hannibal smiled a little at that, and kissed Will's temple, just beneath his curls. "And if I have to wear you out every night in the name of preventing your insomnia, I am prepared to do so."

Will groaned at that, lips ghosting Hannibal's neck. "Think Barney hates me yet?"

"I think he credits you with my recent improved mood," Hannibal whispered, and stretched his neck to the side with a sigh.

"He does," Will whispered, and lips touching Hannibal's pulse, barely there, and then ghosted along his jawline.

"I'm much less ... troublesome when ..." Hannibal shivered when Will kissed him there, "you keep me distracted."

"I'm sure Alana is pleased," Will murmured, forgetting about the horrible things he did, everything that happened with Molly, and put himself inside Hannibal -- inside each other.

Hannibal felt the change, for both of them, like dark clouds clearing to reveal a sunset. "The consensus seems to be that I am unequivocally bad for you ... and you are indisputably good for me."

"You've already tainted me, it's only fair you continue to paint over my heart completely," Will sighed, kissing Hannibal's ear as he spoke.

Hannibal couldn't help but smile at that, and tilted his head to let Will kiss him wherever he liked best. "Have I vandalized you, Will?"

"Often," Will said, with a huffed breath out, and kissed Hannibal properly, deep and passionate, forgetting himself, and diving deep into Hannibal's hot darkness.

Hannibal hummed against Will's lips, and cupped his face with both strong hands as they kissed, lips locking perfectly, as they had since their first meeting, without stumble or struggle. Hannibal sucked Will's lower lip, softly, and gave it a gentle, teasing bite.

"Then what, dear Will, have you done to me?" Hannibal asked, walking Will to his desk.

"What have I *done* to you, Doctor?" Will whispered, letting his lip be bitten, tugging it back with a wistful grin, hands on Hannibal's chest.

"If I have ruined you, have you *saved* me, Will?" Hannibal asked, as he walked Will to the desk, and lifted him easily, so that Will sat on the edge of it.

"No. I've *changed* you, but you don't allow yourself to be saved," Will answered, sitting his bottom to the desk, legs spread to pull Hannibal between them.

Hannibal stepped between Will's legs, and one of his hands brushed it's way down, over Will's thigh, able to feel the rise there under his pants. "I do not allow myself to be saved, for the simple reason that I do not require saving."

"You don't," Will agreed, hips raising to meet Hannibal's hand, his hands on Hannibal's shoulders, and he leaned to kiss him again.

Hannibal met Will more than half way, and wound their tongues together this time as he traced the shape of Will's cock through his pants, teasing him with deft fingers. Hannibal definitely touched him in ways that Will had never thought possible, in ways he thought were forbidden and unreal. He groaned into the kiss,kicking his shoes off to the floor below him.

"I need *you* ," Hannibal whispered, between hot, deep kisses, and smirked at the sound of Will starting to undress himself.

"I'm here. No one else," Will promised, panting against Hannibal's mouth, undoing the buttons on his clean jumpsuit, little snaps that came undone easily.

Hannibal was glad, for once, that they were snaps, not anything more complex. The fabric gave way neatly under Will's hands, exposing the gold and silver of Hannibal's chest hair as he kissed Will even more deeply.

Will slid his fingers through the chest hair with a groan, loving every inch of it, pulling Hannibal toward him as he rubbed their hips together. Hannibal gasped at that, and both of his hands went to Will's hips, yanking him forward so that they could grind together against the edge of the desk.

"Undress," Will demanded, gazing at Hannibal as he barely touched lips like this, leaning back to let their hips clash and collide.

Hannibal smirked and peeled the jumpsuit off, breathing against Will's lips as he undid the rest, and let it slide down his thighs,then off, socks and shoes toed off as well, until he was completely nude in front of Will, flushed in all the right places.

"Now me," the brunet said. Demanding, needy, wanton.

That, Hannibal did in a hurry. He undid Will's shirt quickly, losing a button to his haste as he did so. He tugged Will's shirt off, then dropped to his knees to undo and pull Will's pants off, then his underwear, and kissed his way back up to Will's mouth.

Naked, Will groaned into the doctor's mouth, kissing him harder. "Hannibal..."

Hannibal guided Will's legs around his bare hips, and kissed him harder, hungrier, crushing their lips together so hard they almost bruised as he thought of the feeling in his stomach when Will looked like he was going to *leave* .

Will grunted at the crushing feeling, tugging strands of Hannibal's hair between his fingers, legs wrapped around his hips. Hannibal used one hand around both of them, stroking slowly, brushing his thumb over Will's tip as he twined their tongues together, then pulled back to look at Will.

Groaning, Will leaned back, hips jutting out more, watching Hannibal stroke them both, like some surreal dream. Hannibal's eyes were trained on Will's face, devouring every minute expression of lust before he kissed his neck, biting it just below his ear.

Will was still covered in ghastly looking bite wounds from Hannibal the day before, some still oozing and healing, some just bruised. He let out a gasp, hands tangled in Hannibal's chest hair, pulling him in closer with his legs. "Hannibal-"

There was no need now to hold back and hide the marks on Will. Molly was thankfully, gone, and Will was his again.

Hannibal sucked and bit the thin skin, then slipped Will's wedding ring off, smoothly, stroking him with the other hand.

Will groaned, and let Hannibal take the ring, it was a useless piece of jewelry now. “Please..." he groaned again, "Suck harder."

Hannibal did as Will asked, leaving an unmistakable dark bruise there in the shape of his mouth, still stroking them both at the same time.

Will panted, hips coming off the desk a little, into Hannibal's palm, letting out feral sort of growl from his chest. Hannibal licked Will's adam's apple, then kissed his lips again, like he couldn't possibly stay away from them, and gave Will a squeeze.

"If you want me inside you again, I will need wetting.." Hannibal whispered.

"Sit," Will said, moving off the desk, for Hannibal to sit there instead.

Hannibal kissed Will again, deeply, and held it while he took Will's place on the desk, reluctant to let their lips part. Will groaned into the kiss and then kissed wet bruises down Hannibal's chest, to his thighs, and sucked a good spot there, and then nuzzled Hannibal's cock, licking it slowly as he went down to his knees.

Hannibal groaned softly at that, and ran his hand through Will's hair, shaking as Will licked him that way. "Beautiful tease..."

Will hadn’t done this yet with Hannibal, and was a little nervous, licking the head, and then sucked on him gently.

If the sound that left Hannibal's lips was anything to judge by, Will had a natural talent. "Will-" he groaned, watching Will take him in his mouth, chest heaving.

The sounds Hannibal made were enough to spur on the younger man, taking Hannibal's cock down, relaxing his jaw to get him almost to the hilt. The sight of Will, on his knees, devouring him made Hannibal's head spin with pleasure.

"Your mouth..." Hannibal groaned, with a praising tone, head arched back when he was all the way in Will's mouth, swearing in some slavic language.

Will held his hands to Hannibal's thighs, squeezing. He sucked, licked, and grazed his teeth down Hannibal's shaft.

Hannibal moaned again, getting *harde* r with every graze of Will's teeth. His thighs flexed under Will's hands, and Hannibal gazed down at him, dark-eyed and gripped with lust.

"I thought often of taking you on my desk in my office," Hannibal whispered.

Will moaned against Hannibal, and bit at the top for the comment, gazing up at him.

Hannibal's eyes flashed at the scrape of teeth, and he twisted his hand in Will's curls. "Nearly every time you visited me there..."

Will grunted, taking Hannibal done again, gagging himself sweetly on it.

"Will-" Hannibal groaned, with a shaking voice, and let Will hold the choke for a moment, then pulled him off, and up. Hannibal spun Will around quickly, and pinned him to the desk, kissing his own taste out of Will's mouth as he crawled over him.

Will let out a groan, back to the table, and kissed Hannibal passionately. "Need you." He grabbed the bottle of baby oil sitting there and slicked himself with it, fingers in his hole as Hannibal watched.

"Need you, too," Hannibal whispered, and guided Will's legs around his hips, then removed Will’s fingers as he plunged his cock in, still slick from Will's mouth.

Will tensed, but then felt his body relax, legs holding Hannibal tight around his middle, not letting him get too far out of touch, or reach. Will leaned up and steadied himself, hands on Hannibal's shoulders.

Hannibal stared down at Will, overwhelmed as he always was by his beauty when they were like this, then kissed his head into the desk as he began to thrust, slowly at first, arms around Will's thighs.

Will moaned as their positioned changed a little, his hips canted up and taking every thrust of Hannibal's straight to his prostate, making his body quiver involuntarily.

Hannibal loved seeing Will shake like that, and gripped his ass with both hands, helping Will's beautiful body arch up as he thrust inside him, starting to get faster and rougher as he looked at Will's eyes.

Will's eyes were dark with lust, half closed with desperation to keep them open, to watch Hannibal fuck him senseless, to watch the pieces of his walls crumble when they did this.

"Harder," Will gasped, clawing at Hannibal's back.

Hannibal smirked a little, eyes *black* and shining as he started to screw Will into the surface of the desk, hard and fast, like he needed to make Will come or he couldn't *breathe* . And come Will did, tumbling down the darkness toward the light of pleasurable coupling, dragging Hannibal with him.

Chapter 4

Chapter by beforethedawn, Destinyawakened

Chapter Notes

> Here is where the talk of alternate realities and universes comes back into play and is *very* important!

Five hours after Hannibal sent Will the message that he was coming to him, the city was in chaos. Police were scouring the streets, and people locked themselves in their homes when they heard the news that Hannibal the Cannibal had escaped.

The dock, however, was calm, no one seemed to know anything about the boat, or about Will waiting there.

A hand gripped the side of the boat from the waves of the cool water, and Hannibal's head surfaced. He took a breath, and pulled himself up, out of the depths, stepping onto the deck of the boat, dripping wet.

Will had made sandwiches, nothing exciting, and he knew it would be time, and had settled the dogs with a walk and then some water and food. Sometime during his wait, he had fallen asleep at the small table, phone in hand as if he had been checking the news on and off, and for Hannibal.

Water dripped on the deck, and the sound woke the dogs. The Leeds dog and Buster barked softly, but Imago just jumped down from where he slept on Will's lap, and ran to Hannibal to be picked up in his arms. Winston just stared at Hannibal.

"Hello there," Hannibal whispered to the pup, scooping him up as he stepped in and closed the door, then looked at Will, asleep.

He stepped closer, and sat in a chair near the sleeping man, admiring his face in the semi-dark.

There was an empty tumbler with a few gold drops of liquid at the bottom on the table near Will’s other hand. Imago gave a little howl, and Will jolted, and then again when he saw Hannibal sitting there.

"When did you get here?" he asked, groggily.

"And here I thought perhaps you might be worried," Hannibal said with a soft smile, then picked up the tumbler, smelling it with a frown before he put the glass on the counter behind him. "Just now."

Will watched Hannibal with slightly glazed eyes, sitting back in his chair, bare feet slipping in some of the water dripping from Hannibal. "I was. But then I remembered who I was worrying about."

Hannibal grabbed a towel from the kitchen and dried himself a little, then tossed it on the floor to dry the wood, and touched Will's face with one wet hand. "I managed."

Will gazed up at Hannibal, watching his every move, his every expression. "I knew you would."

"Are you certain this is still what you want? Or shall I check myself in again?" Hannibal asked with a little smirk. "I'd rather not, I'm certain my cell won't be quite as nice the second time around."

"This is our second chance," Will said, quietly, touching the hand that was touching his face, wrapping his fingers around it.

Hannibal pulled a plain gold ring from his pocket, Will's old wedding band, and put it in his hand.

"I did not want to leave it for them to find. I was going to throw it overboard but thought that it should be your decision, what you will do with it."

Will took a deep breath and held the ring in his hand, and stood. He could ship it back to Molly, but it was such a cheap ring he didn't think it meant all that much if she had it or not.

He shifted his jaw and walked back up deck.

Hannibal dried his hair and took off his shirt, then watched Will through the window, observing his shape against the dark sky before he found one of Will's shirts laying on the bed, and put it on, then Will's knit cap to hide his hair from anyone passing by who might recognize him.

Hannibal walked out, with him, and touched his shoulder, then the back of Will's neck with a chilly hand.

"I know you enjoyed the security of it around your finger, the role of husband and father," Hannibal said softly, understandingly. "I promise that you will have that chance again, Will."

Will huffed, looking over at Hannibal, smiling a little, a bit of disbelief in his eyes. "Husband maybe, but child? I don't think we're paired with the right parts to do that. Besides, me breeding is a terrible idea. You told me that yourself."

"You enjoyed the role of father both times without biological involvement," Hannibal said, and wrapped an arm around Will's waist. "Even so, technology can perform wonders these days..."

Will shrugged the comment off, and looked at ring in his palm, and then threw it as far as he could out in the waters, watching as his perfect life flew through the air, and plunked into the water, disappearing.

Hannibal hugged Will from behind with both arms, and kissed the side of his cheek, then nuzzled his neck. "You are, and have always been remarkably brave."

"Or incredibly stupid," Will said, quietly, settling his arms over Hannibal's, not regretting his choices in the least. He felt like a weight had been lifted, even if he was destined to run forever now.

"Frederick was incredibly stupid," Hannibal corrected. " *You* are brave." He looked back as a police car drove slowly down the street at the end of the dock. "We had better begin our voyage."

Will nodded, and took Hannibal's hand, leading him down below for now. "I'll get us moving, you stay. There's a sandwich for you on the counter."

Hannibal nodded, and passed Will the knit cap as he descended the stairs, then looked up at Will, and kissed his knuckles, with a fond look at him. "Thank you, Will."

Will took the cap and smiled down at Hannibal, leaning to kiss him, and then tugged the cap on, and then shut the small door, and set about getting the boat prepped to go, He unhooked them from the harbor dock, and the boat set out toward bay.

A few hours later, and far enough off the coast, Will felt safe enough to go check on Hannibal and the dogs, and opened the door.

Hannibal was asleep, with Imago in his arms, and Winston and the new dog laying beside him. Winston looked up and wagged at Will, then jumped off the bed to go greet him, and sniffed at the salt air.

"Hey, bud," Will said, bending down to pet Winston, and then walked over to Hannibal, taking the cap off, and crawled into the bed with him.

Hannibal was more tired than usual with the chase through the city, not to mention what he'd had to do to get away from the asylum. He sighed when Will climbed into bed, and opened his eyes, looking up at him with a soft smile.

"Where are we?"

Will put himself in Hannibal's arm, Imago between them, and snuggled up to him. "Twenty miles off the coast, or so."

"Is that International Waters?" Hannibal asked, curiously, and pulled Will into bed as the boat rocked gently around them.

Imago licked at Will's chin, and snuggled down between them, happy to have his pack here.

"Almost, few more miles, we're set on a course, we'll be fine," Will murmured, gazing at Hannibal up close, no walls between them now, no glass to consider or separate them.

Hannibal was warm now under the blankets, and curled his long, strong leg around Will's when he climbed in, gazing at him with utter adoration. "The third time's the charm.."

Will let out a sigh, getting comfortable under Hannibal's added weight, pleasant to know he was here now with him, not in prison. "Where shall we go?"

"South," Hannibal said, with a little smile, his eyes sparkling in the dark. "Do you wish to see Argentina immediately? There are other places we can explore, safely," he said, fixing Will's hair for him, brushing it out of his eyes.

"We have all the time in the world," Will said, quietly, wishing to go where ever Hannibal knew would be safest. He closed his eyes at the touch, and nestled in closer.

"Then for now, we shall simply go south, and see where the wind takes us. We'll have to avoid the rest of the states, of course, but Cuba can be welcoming," Hannibal said, knowingly.

Once people figured out Will was gone, things would get... rough for them, hard to stay here. He'd left his phone at his house, deleting everything off of it first, leaving no evidence that he'd been talking to Hannibal at all.

"South." He nodded his understanding, and rested his forehead against Hannibal's.

Hannibal still had the phone he used with Will, not daring to let it out of his sight. He had brought only that, and Will's ring with him, and the phone was ruined now, water-logged.

"I already like being at sea with you."

"It's not fancy," Will chuckled, and Imago moved to lay behind his knees instead, and Will got closer, and kissed Hannibal.

"Not all good things are fancy," Hannibal said, before he kissed Will again. "This is the ship you built in your despair to come and find me. It is the most beautiful ship in the world."

Will laughed, lightly, and kissed Hannibal fully, his heart fluttering more freely now that they were together, the way they had been meant to be.

Hannibal kissed Will back, finally, really, truly as alone with him as they could ever get, on Earth. He kissed the laugh out of Will's mouth, slowly and thoroughly, like it made him hungry for more of it. "I love you."

"I love you, too," Will said, honestly, words he thought a long time ago, but never said, never really *sure* . He held on to Hannibal, arms around his back.

Hannibal kissed Will again, slowly, wearing nothing in bed. There was no point, of course, it was finally, finally just the two of them, and it was *splendid* . He rolled over Will, pinning him to the bed with a sigh between their lips, and his mouth made it's way down the side of Will's neck.

"You may want to think of a new name..."

"Oh?" Will asked, letting Hannibal manhandle him anyway he wanted, not protesting for now, as all he wanted for those five hours it took Hannibal to get to him, was to have him

here.

"It might be best if in public, we didn't call each other by our real names," Hannibal whispered, and kissed his way down Will's chest. His broad shoulders flexed and stretched as he did, dwarfing Will beneath him.

Will shrugged out of his t-shirt and tossed it on the ground, which Winston went to and curled up on.

Will wasn't much shorter than Hannibal, but size wise, Hannibal was *bigger* . He loved that, though.

"I call you Lloyd then?"

Hannibal chuckled and nodded. "You may call me whatever you wish," Hannibal whispered, and ran a hand down Will's smooth chest before he began to kiss it.

"You mentioned this boat was under the name of Lloyd Wyman, So then I assume that's your alias. I should be... what goes well with Lloyd?" Will chuckled at the thought, hands resting in Hannibal's short hair, adoringly.

Hannibal laughed this time, amused at the thought, between kisses to Will's chest, and looked up at him, considering his answer. "Lloyd and Marcus."

“Alright,” Will said as he petted down some of Hannibal's hair, still smiling, still happy. "I'll be Marcus."

Hannibal leaned up to kiss Will on the lips, with a shake of his head, then kissed him harder and deeper. "You have the most beautiful English complexion, perhaps John..."

"Very common," Will said, but he didn't mind, common was better than uncommon and bringing attention to them. He kissed Hannibal slowly but solidly, tongues brushing.

"A common name for an uncommon man," Hannibal whispered between kisses, his own toes curling in the sheets when Will kissed him like that. He slipped his thigh between Will's thighs, and rubbed Will with it, slowly.

"Mm," Will hummed into Hannibal's mouth, agreeing or disagreeing, it didn't matter. His hips moved on their own, clad in loose denim, searching for more friction from Hannibal.

Hannibal loved the way the bed moved under them while they moved on top of it, the motion adding another dimension to the bliss of being close to Will. Hannibal's hands undid Will's belt, then his pants, and tugged them down his hips, fingers brushing at pale, smooth skin as he went.

"I get the distinct feeling we'll never get much done," Will sighed, lifting his hips to allow Hannibal to remove his jeans.

Hannibal removed Will's jeans, smoothly, and kissed his stomach, then his thighs as he did. "And are you bemoaning our lost productivity?" Hannibal asked, softly, darkly, against the

inside of Will's thigh.

"No," Will said, squirming a little as Hannibal kissed sensitive spots they had not yet explored together. "Just predicting."

Hannibal's dark eyes flickered up at Will, playfully, and he dragged his tongue along the sensitive inside of Will's thigh as he rubbed the muscle along the tops of them with both hands. "What a relief."

Will *almost* giggled, trying to squirm away from the feeling, aroused and ticklish at the same time.

He brushed his toes against Hannibal's back. "I don't think I'd ever complain about this."

Hannibal smirked up, amused by Will's giggling, then kissed his hip, and dragged his tongue over Will's cock, slowly. "I had no idea you were the ticklish sort."

"How would you?" Will asked, aware that all they've ever done was simply fuck, or have Hannibal physically hurt him. He groaned at the lavishly long stripe Hannibal licked to his cock, like a tease.

Hannibal arched an eyebrow and did it again, then ghosted his fingers over the sensitive back of Will's thigh to see if he was ticklish there, too.

Will wasn't as sensitive there, but it was enough to garner a huff from Will, frustrated. "Hannibal..."

Will's reactions were quite literally the reason Hannibal got out of bed for the last few years.

Hannibal sucked the tip of Will's cock for a moment, promisingly, then licked the inside of his thigh again, teasing it, confusing Will's nerves. Will let out a laugh, mostly because his senses were confused, and he could feel Hannibal's amusement and lust all at once. He wiped a hand over his eyes.

"Making up for years of explorations, doctor?"

"We finally have the time."

***

Will set the ship to keep steering south, just outside the US border of the ocean, and then made his way back inside to the ship's cabin, light up nicely now that they were out of sight from the harbors. "Smells good..."

Hannibal set the last fork down and looked up with a little smile. It may not have looked gourmet, but the dish smelled like something from a restaurant. "Hello, Will," he smiled.

Will smiled, letting it brighten his eyes as he took the step down into the tiny little kitchenette. He kissed Hannibal's cheek in passing. "Hi."

It was cozy down in the belly of the boat, and domestic, with the dogs laying around the table.

"They are hoping one of us drops something," Hannibal chuckled, and crouched to pet Buster, picking him up.

"I am surprised he isn't full of shark." Will chuckled, giving Buster a little pet.

"I doubt he got a good chunk off, but he deserves something for his bravery." Hannibal seemed to agreed, and went to the counter, and gave Buster a piece of bacon, proudly.

"He bit the shark right on the *nose* ," Hannibal said, like he was proud of the dog, beaming.

Imago growled and barked, and Will picked him up to soothe him. He hardly howled now that he and Hannibal were both here with him. "One day, he'll bite off more than he can chew."

"Perhaps," Hannibal said, and offered some bacon to the other dogs, and Lucy ate from his fingers, very carefully. "Good girl."

Will watched Hannibal with his dogs, heart growing fonder for it. "I never thought I'd see you as a dog lover."

Hannibal flushed a tiny bit, and looked back up at Will as he stood. "I am in your element now, among them. I've never spent much time among them."

It was nice to see Hannibal a little flushed, pink where he was usually level and tan. Will's small smile grew and he kissed Hannibal on the mouth, chaste but admiring. "You like them because you're stuck with them?" he teased.

Hannibal kissed Will back, and smiled at him, a strand of hair falling in his eyes. "I have never been around a dog long enough to understand them, but in Buster's encounter with the shark, I've begun to see the spark of personality in them, how different they all are."

"They are all very different. Like humans. Will moved the piece of hair and tucked it back for Hannibal. So far, being away from the crime scenes and the case, he was feeling better, but he knew there was still something lingering.

Hannibal smiled at Will with his eyes and kissed Will, softly. "Shall we eat?" he asked, directing Will's attention to the table.

Will nodded, and set Imago down at his feet, letting him play with the laces of his boots. "I'm starved," he said, and started to eat what Hannibal prepared for them. "So much better than ramen."

Hannibal just laughed at that, and washed his hands, then sat down. "When did you get up?"

Will had forced himself from sleep when he had the edge of a nightmare starting, and went out to fish instead, watching the waters and checking with his tablet on the news. "Little before you."

"You should have woken me," Hannibal said, and poured Will a little white wine.

"You were very tired. I didn't want to bother you." Will sipped the wine, and gestured to get Hannibal to sit next to him and stop fussing.

Hannibal sat down, and picked up his fork after putting his napkin in his lap. "Thank you. I woke up to Imago licking my shoulder. I was ... confused."

Will laughed, and had to cover his mouth with his hand not to spit out his wine or food, giving Hannibal an amused look. "I bet you were...."

Hannibal smirked back at Will, and took a bite of the frittata, which was just as good as everything else he cooked. "My hopes that perhaps you had a special fondness for my shoulders was quickly dashed."

"I'd find a better way other than licking at your shoulder to let you know my fondnesses." Will took a few more bites, quickly, starved as he had not eaten since that sandwich he had.

Hannibal smiled at the thought of that, and looked over at Will as he ate. This was the life he'd wanted, for years. "Oh? Care to elaborate?"

"That would spoil the surprise, Doctor," Will teased, brows raised at him, almost seriously, as he put another bite into his mouth, chewing slowly.

Hannibal's dark eyes sparkled, and he sat back in his chair, shoulders back, making them almost look ready to tear through Will's shirt. "I see, well, I do hate to spoil a surprise."

"That would be rude," Will said, stuffing the last bite into his mouth, and smirked at Hannibal, watching the way his muscles moved under the too tight shirt.

"Of course it would be," Hannibal smirked, watching the interested path of Will's eyes. "You don't mind that I've borrowed your shirt?"

Will shook his head, leaning over to give the shirt a little tug at the bottom where it rode up a bit on Hannibal. "Not at all."

Hannibal smirked, and smoothed the shirt over his wide chest with one hand. "A little short on me, perhaps, but comfortable, and it smells like you."

Will's eyes watched Hannibal's hand, committing the sight to memory, even if he didn't need it. "We'll get you some things when we find a safe place to harbor."

"It is likely wise to maintain a more casual appearance," Hannibal admitted, as he rose to take their plates to the tiny sink. "Less likely to draw attention to myself that way..."

"A good idea. Speaking of that," Will said, taking his tablet out of the drawer, he pulled up a website, a new report. "Looks like they found out who the Dragon is, but he's vanished, no one has seem him. Speculations are he's kidnapped me, and you've escaped to go after him."

Hannibal stood and walked around to Will to look over his shoulder at the report, reading it. "I was right about the cleft palate," he murmured, looking at a photo of Francis Dolarhyde.

"Mhm," Will said, letting Hannibal see the article. "I wonder where he really ran off to."

Hannibal took the tablet and scrolled through it, able to read very, very quickly. "I wonder, indeed..." he murmured. "Mr. Dolarhyde had no to reason to stop."

Will closed his eyes, trying to remember the crime scene, how it felt like it had just been... left. "Someone *took* him."

"Do you recall the other us?" Hannibal asked, and set the tablet down.

"In that other world?" Will's mind has already thought that, and it was /crazy/ but not unlikely, as they had already discovered. "Yes..."

"Perhaps our monster was transported there, for someone's amusement," Hannibal said, smoothly.

"That younger Will, he said something about an agency, HYDRA? What do we know about them?" Will asked, knowing he knew very little, and had never gotten anything from the web when he searched.

"Nothing," Hannibal said, looking at Will like they were working on a case together. He sat down across the small table, considering that.

"Nothing appeared when I searched. Odd, don't you think? The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world that he does not exist... I think HYDRA has done the same to this world, very possibly the next, too. Nothing is quite as intriguing as a conspicuous absence."

"Clones of people, more than one at that, from all sorts of universes? It's very... suspicious. How power is this organization that they can pull that off? Why take The Dragon?"

"Disruption," Hannibal said, watching Will. "I looked at many of the profiles of those in that world, all of them seem to have made idyllically happy families," he said.

"What a playground for our dragon."

"And pets." Of course, Will would worry about the dogs. Well, maybe the cats too. "Can we warn them?"

"That would be the merciful thing to do," Hannibal nodded.

"I wish we could help them directly, but that's not possible. We can at least give them a name and photograph," Will said, pulling up facebook.

"That is more than the families in this world had, I hope that will be sufficient," Hannibal sighed.

"I'll send that one Will that talked to you a message. He seems more in the know," Will said, and shot off a private message to the man.

"The figurative alpha of the pack," Hannibal said, with a sigh. "They are going to have their hands very full."

"I almost feel bad." No, Will *did* feel bad, this was how he got wrapped up in things that were *bad* for him.

"Mr. Dolarhyde will be confused, at a loss for where to go, how to survive in this new world," Hannibal mused. "And in his confusion, he will feel anger."

A message back confirmed what Hannibal said.

"They already have a family down. No one they knew though. He hasn't figured who everyone is yet, but if they give him time..."

"If he sees how happy they are, how happy everyone is there, he may evolve to choose a slightly different sort of family," Hannibal said, with a slight frown.

"Not the traditional kind," Will sighed, looking through the profiles of everyone that lived there.

"Lots of two husband households. Lots of kids. Looks like a few live out of the way..."

"The perfect hunting ground, the perfect victims," Hannibal mused. "Our shy boy is going to evolve, or die."

Chapter 5

Hannibal, curious about the infamous Bermuda Triangle, walked up to where Will was steering the ship, followed by a small parade of dogs.

The air here was warm, tropical and more fragrant than the almost frozen water near Baltimore.

"Should we actually disappear in the triangle, our escape will be perfect."

Will was sitting at the helm of the ship, and looked up at Hannibal as he and dogs joined him in the warm breeze as they approached the Bermuda waters. "I think we'll be fine."

Hannibal touched Will's back with a sigh, and kissed the back of his neck, very affectionate now that they had space and time. "Have you ever been here before?"

Will shook his head;he hardly ever left the states, honestly. Going to Florence was as far as he had ever been. "Can't say I have," he said, resisting the urge to nuzzle into Hannibal, like a dog might.

"It is far more colorful than the states, flowers everywhere, the trees scent the air with fruit," Hannibal said, and stroked some of Will's curls from his eyes.

"And much warmer too," Will sighed, not that he was complaining, most things would be warmer in the direction they were going.

"You dislike the heat?" Hannibal asked, Will, curiously as they sailed into dark waters. The horizon blurred with the shy, making it seem like they were sailing into space itself.

"I didn't say that. I'm from New Orleans, the heat is in my bones," Will chuckled, a little lighter feeling now that Hannibal was closer again.

"You certainly have heat in your bones," Hannibal agreed with a purr, and kissed the side of Will's neck again as Imago chased Lucy around the deck for fun, both of them wagging.

Will canted his head a little to accommodate Hannibal's mouth on his neck, and then nuzzled back this time, reaching up to tug the doctor down next to him. He thought he'd miss his family, he thought he'd miss the makeshift security they held for him, but Hannibal had been right, it had been there just to comfort him into knowing he was normal.

And he wasn't.

Hannibal hummed and kissed Will's skin as they sailed into the mysterious triangle, nuzzling and kissing his neck as they travelled, smoothly. He became so distracted that he didn't notice the sudden drop in temperature the moment it happened.

Will had wrapped an arm around Hannibal's shoulders, and pressed their mouths together, only squeezing closer to Hannibal as it got colder, but thought nothing much of it.

At least not until a thick morning fog embraced them, and then suddenly it was gone, and a large bridge was above them.

Hannibal shivered at the change, and pulled his lips away from Will's to look around them. "Ah. I see. Will, I think we took a wrong turn."

"There is nothing else around here," Will said, or there wasn't supposed to be. He got out his phone which had his map on it, and sure enough, they were not even close to Bermuda. "We're in Gotham Harbor… New Jersey"

Hannibal chuckled as Buster trotted out on the deck and barked at the bridge that wasn't supposed to be there. "I think we've been pulled into that other world."

Will made a noise, but he quickly recovered himself, and looked at the bridge and the dogs as they seemed to get excited for land again. "Couldn't have been any better timing..."

"Perhaps we are needed here," Hannibal said, thoughtfully, and scanned the skyline with his eyes. "Shall we let them know we've arrived?"

Will had to admit he felt a little better being back in the same zone as Dolarhyde, it meant they might still be able to do some good. He looked at Hannibal, assessing him for a moment. "Who do we tell?"

"Everyone," Hannibal smirked, and tapped his phone. "Easy to do these days."

"Nothing like a grand entrance, hm?" Will didn't see that as being a good idea considering the corporation they were likely up against. "I'm certain all the wrong people know we're here already," he murmured.

"It would be wise to make sure the right people know too."

"Or we're here because they wanted it that way," Will said, "do you want me to make the message?"

"I can do it," Hannibal said, and pulled out his phone, then picked Buster up, holding him to calm the dog as he barked.

Will rubbed his temples, not sure if it was the transfer here that gave him a headache, or stress. Or neither. "Thanks," he said, steering the boat towards a harbor not too far out from there position.

"We are officially introduced," Hannibal said, and hugged Will from behind as he steered. "At least we have our own accommodations."

Will let out a huffed chuckled, more or less, and kept his hands to steering, but the weight of Hannibal behind him was secure, a lot like he'd wanted when he sailed to Florence. "At least the dogs can go off boat to do their business."

"We can walk them a little, let them stretch their legs," Hannibal suggested, and wrinkled his nose as Buster licked his chin.

"Put the ruffian down," Will laughed, docking the ship where someone was signaling him to go.

"Just trying to keep him quiet," Hannibal said with a little smile and a slight pinkening of his cheeks, as though he was caught doing something beneath him.

Will got the boat anchored, and tethered quickly, and slid the man at the dock some money for the spot, and then turned to Hannibal. "You're gonna spoil him."

"Not at all," Hannibal scoffed, and set Buster down with a look at Will. "Are we installed here? Settled?" Hannibal asked as he leashed the dogs, gracefully.

"Yes. I'll lock up," Will said, taking the keys from the engine and went to lock the doors into the their living space, and grabbed Imago and his leash, and then Winston, so they each had two dogs.

"Perfect," Hannibal said, and watched Will, with admiration in his gaze. "It will be nice to have somewhere to purchase the necessities."

"Instead of resorting to eat my last package of ramen?" Will asked, a terse grin on his mouth, and slid the keys back into his pocket. He jumped from the deck to the dock with Imago in hand, and then helped Winston do the same.

"There is a lot I would eat before I resorted to that," Hannibal quipped, and jumped down with Buster in his arms, then reached up to help Lucy.

Lucy managed across, a little older than the others, but soon they were all on the dock, and heading toward the mainland, into a city that seemed rather smoggy, and dark, even given the light of summer upon it.

"I wouldn't let you touch the dogs."

"I would not eat the dogs," Hannibal said with a little smirk, and took two of the leashes. "Or you."

"Wouldn't you?" Will asked, one brow raised, letting Imago down to walk next to Winston, sniffing around his feet, panting happily.

"Certainly not in the culinary sense," Hannibal smirked, staring at Will as they walked through the streets.

Will rolled his eyes, not entirely sure that Hannibal wouldn't eat him if they got mad enough at each other again. Or at least threaten to. "The other sense wouldn't be very fulfilling in the long run, nor would it sustain you from hunger."

"Which is why I would need to repeat it, frequently," Hannibal said, letting their shoulders touch as they strolled.

A smile slipped across his face as his cheeks went rosy, and Will slipped his free hand into Hannibal's, testing the weight of it publicly. "Hm."

Hannibal admired the rosiness of Will's cheeks, and squeezed his hand, not pulling away as they wandered into what looked like the downtown core, the dark streets lit by amber street lights. "You are lovely when you blush."

Will slid things fingers between each others, leaning in against Hannibal just a bit, watching the streets with an open mind, keen senses heightened here, like a sense of danger lurked in every corner. "You compliment where there should be none."

Hannibal, in contrast, was calm, even amused by the roughness around them.

A man glanced at Will from under a pulled up hood, then saw Hannibal and looked away, ducking his head as he passed them. "You'd rather I kept it to myself?"

Will was small in comparison to Hannibal, and no he wasn't much of a fighter either, but he trusted that his companion would be.

Knew he would be.

"I don't mind, I just don't know what to say to them."

“Thank you is always a nice place to start," Hannibal said, with a little smile. "Nothing else needs to be said."

"Thankfulness often feels strange on my tongue," Will said, cocking his head over at Hannibal, briefly, and then squeezed his hand.

"I accept kisses, in that case," Hannibal whispered, with a sidelong look at Will, leading him into a nicer part of town, like he had radar for class.

Another eyeroll, but Will paused his walking, and grasped Hannibal closer by the hand, and kissed him at just the inside of a clean looking alley way, out of sight.

Hannibal smirked at that, and kissed Will back, softly, then looked at him, up close. "That wasn't so hard."

The dogs were pulling them back into the street, on the sidewalk, in no rush to stop again, and Will chuckled as he was pulled from Hannibal, and took his hand again. "More of those will have to wait until we wear them out."

"I suppose so," Hannibal smiled, and caught Will's hand again, heading toward what looked like a fairly nice park just before a bridge. "I would be happy to run them every morning."

"Hannibal Lecter? Running?" Will snorted, squeezing Hannibal's hand. "I usually jog with them. Or did."

"I run, or swim, but I have the feeling the harbor is not the place for laps," Hannibal said, as they stepped into the park together.

"I saw the water, I won't let the dogs in there," Will murmured, shaking his head, getting to the park, and there was a little place for dogs, so Will took them over to it and let them off their leashes.

"I assume you, the boy who grew up in a boat, can swim?" Hannibal asked with a sparkle in his eyes.

Will casted a long glance at Hannibal. "I'd be a fool to even attempt boating if I couldn't."

"You've taken risks before," Hannibal teased, slyly.

"None so stupid," Hannibal teased back, though he had to admit, he'd taken dumber risk with Hannibal.

"Running off with a cannibal is hardly a risk-free decision," Hannibal said, watching Will with a smile in his eyes as the dogs played with a stick.

Imago was trying to keep up, chasing down Buster like he was bigger than him, growling playfully.

"Probably my worst offense and riskiest decision as of late."

"A risk I'm very glad you've finally decided it was time to take," Hannibal murmured, with a deeply fond look at Will. "A risk I don't intend to make you regret."

God, Will hoped not. He could only be shattered so many times, and put back together. Last time, he put himself back together, and even then the glue didn't hold that well.

Will sneaked an arm around Hannibal's waist, daring to be closer to him as their dogs played. "Kill me first if you do."

Hannibal shook his head, and kissed Will's cheek, then his jaw. "I swear that will never be necessary," Hannibal murmured, very seriously.

"Protecting me and loving me are different," Will stated, leaning into Hannibal a little more, with the sort of faith that he would take his weight, happily.

"I could never have evolved into a protector if I did not love you," Hannibal said, truthfully, and held Will easily, supporting his weight without effort.

Will liked to test Hannibal every now and again, doing things like pressing his weight into him, trusting he'd hold him up, staying awake to listen to him, f*eel* him dreaming. So far, he'd felt no malice toward him.

"I can protect myself, you know."

"I am well aware of that, Will," Hannibal said with a little smile, lines fanning out at the edges of his warm eyes when he did that, a private expression on his face, only for Will. "I have witnessed your ferocity, and found it beautiful. Perhaps the best protection I can give you is the assurance that you will never need protection from me."

"You are who I have been protecting myself from," Will whispered, honestly, and wrapped his arms around Hannibal's shoulders, resting their foreheads together, a private moment.

Hannibal sighed, and nestled his face against Will's as he held him, looking at him a little sadly. "I know," he said, and touched Will's cheek, fingers tracing the curve of it down to his jaw.

Will had his shield down, a rare thing that he swore would end with Molly, and never again with the man in front of him.

He had been wrong.

"I can't be without you again."

Not honestly.

"I never could be without you," Hannibal whispered. "I can *wait* if I must, but to face a world without you in it is more painful to me than death," he said, honestly.

Will felt his breath leave his chest. He had mostly told himself he didn't love Hannibal -- couldn't love Hannibal -- because of the awful things he had done.

The truth was, Will wasn't much better. He killed Hobbs and liked it in the aftermath and hindsight. Then he killed again, and it was.... powerful. When he manipulated Matthew Brown to go after Hannibal, the game played was empowering.

Will was no better, and Molly deserved better.

Will deserved Hannibal, in turns.

Leaning in, he kissed Hannibal softly, just a gentle press of lips.

Hannibal kissed Will back, the same way. Two creatures who could, and had attacked with teeth kissed softly and gently in the darkness under an oak tree. Something about the sweet gentle press of Will's lips made Hannibal's heart pound in his chest. Will swallowed, biting the inside of his lip, watching Hannibal's amber brown eyes as he spoke, and curled his hands into the too tight shirt he borrowed.

"And I was trying to cut you right out of my brain. Fitting."

"I felt an enormous sense of relief when Mason's men took us," Hannibal admitted, softly. "It stopped me from doing what I felt at the time I m*ust* do, I believed it was the only thing left for me to do. I enjoyed our capture, in that sense, because it prolonged my time with you."

Will chuckled, hardly recalling the time, actually, too drugged to care but l they were on their way to muskrat farms. "We've made stupid mistakes in the name of love, haven't we?"

Hannibal remembered. He remembered being glad he was bound, glad he was upside down, next to Will. He remembered being glad that he could be next to Will without having to finish him, as he had been sure he *had* to after Will pulled the knife on him. “We have.”

Will could still hear the dogs in the background, barking and playing, and he could feel Hannibal's love and affection pouring off him in waves.

Will knew he should have been rattled and even offended that Hannibal had to have that done, but those times were confusing for Will, so wrapped in Hannibal's head, that when he saw Jack again, he felt like a complete let down. As he always had.

"Jack asked me once when I called to tell you. Why I had. I told him that you were my friend, and I wanted to run away with you, and I hadn't known just how much of that had been true until I heard you pick up that night. I was set to leave. Everything."

Hannibal swallowed hard, and his chest didn't move for a moment, he seemed to have forgotten to breathe."And events were already in motion that you could not have stopped," Hannibal whispered, holding Will more tightly to him, his heart beating fast to know that Will *had* wanted to leave with them. He wanted to run away with them, in the end.

Will wanted it even before he knew that Abigail had been with Hannibal the whole time. The sense of betrayal over hadn't even hit him when he saw her, he just knew he wanted to *leave*, and then everything changed.

"None of the ingredients were *right*," he added, with a little sigh as Hannibal held him, and knew even now he'd never get an apology for what the other man had done, because Will, honestly, knew he deserved it for his double cross.

"I wanted to surprise you," Hannibal said, softly, looking at Will close up in the dark, able to see him very clearly.

"I was ... devastated, angry, enraged," Hannibal admitted, and closed his eyes with a heavy sigh.

"And the worst part of it all was that I still felt an indescribable love for you."

"I know." Will was silent after than, and just closed his eyes, arms around Hannibal's shoulders again, taking in the now, not the past.

"I think we have both felt the conflict between the need to avenge a wrong done, and the need to keep loving each other," Hannibal said, holding WIll.

"I'm tired of fighting you." That had been the issue when Will told Hannibal to leave three years ago. He was *tired*, and he wasn't sure that Hannibal was, too, that he'd keep trying to push him.

"No more fighting each other," Hannibal said, softly, promising it. "It takes too high a toll from both of us."

Will sighed, audibly, and leaned in, resting his head forehead on Hannibal's shoulders, breathing up against his neck, relieved. "Good."

"We are finally together, I would be loathe to change that for any reason," Hannibal whispered and watched the dogs play while Will snuggled him. He never thought this would

be his life, but he loved it.

Will didn't either, and he mourned the thought of the way he left Molly and Walter, but argued with himself that he left all else he had with them, everything.

Hopefully it was enough.

Will laced his fingers into Hannibal's hair, kissing his jaw.

"Me too."

Molly would, undoubtedly, in Hannibal's mind, move on quickly. She was suitable for anyone, after all, and would find another mate in months.

Hannibal knew that he would never find another Will, even if other Wills existed, his love was intense, and specific. Only *this* Will would do, no one else.

He closed his eyes at the kiss to his jaw, and turned his head to kiss Will's lips in the dark. "I need you, with me."

"I've always been with you," Will whispered back quietly, almost darkly, and kissed Hannibal slowly, sliding his tongue along his lips, and then past.

Hannibal smiled a little at that, and kissed Will properly, parting his lips to wind their tongues together with a soft moan that rumbled in his wide chest.

Will matched his groan, heatedly, overwhelmed by all this senses and intuition, and sunk deeper into the kiss, fingers grasping at strands of graying hair.

Hannibal tangled his hand in Will's hair and tugged at his curls, softly. He pulled him closer with his arm, and heard a voice from the other part of the park, jeering at them.

"Fags..."

Feeling the darkness awaken in Hannibal, Will turned his head to narrowed his eyes on the man, but kept a hand on Hannibal's chest, over his heart, like keeping him in place.

Then, he turned back to Hannibal and kissed him harder, as if proving a point, and not letting someone bully them away.

Hannibal's muscles were tense, ready to leap over the wire fence around the off leash area and hunt the man down in the dark. Will kissed him, and Hannibal bit Will's tongue, teeth *ready* and sharp.

Their heckler just made a disgusted noise and walked off, muttering to himself about them.

"Hmm..." Hannibal groaned, unable to bring himself to protest Will's means of stopping him from killing the man.

"Stay with me," Will murmured into the kiss, holding Hannibal's attention the only way he knew how without violence. He kissed him again, biting his lip until it bled, and the he sucked on it.

At least for Will, violence wasn't the best way to stop Hannibal. Will's lips made a very, very persuasive argument, much more so than fists, or a blade.

He sighed, letting the prey escape, and kissed Will instead, groaning to himself when Will bit him like that.

"Will..."

"Take it out on me," Will moaned, biting his lips, sucking in turns, and hands on his hips, brushing their groins together.

Hannibal groaned a little and bit Will's lower lip at the thought, both of his hands flexing around the lean muscle in Will's waist. He turned him, neatly and quickly, and pinned Will against the trunk of a tree.

Will arched, hips chanted back toward Hannibal, groaned readily, sudden rush of lust making it hard to think straight. "Hannibal..."

Hannibal ran both hands under Will's shirt, with need, and scratched his blunt nails over Will's skin, leaving red marks there as he kissed him again, pressing his skull into the tree. Will groaned, loud and lewd, and pulled Hannibal to him, kissing him passionately, biting and sucking his tongue.

Will groaning like that was irresistible, and Hannibal slid one hand under Will's thigh, and hiked it up, over his hip, pressing against him so that Will could feel just how turned on he was against his own groin.

Will let out a ragged breath, wishing they were back at the boat now, in private, so he could suck Hannibal done and Fuck himself on him. "Please."

"Please what?" Hannibal asked with a devious purr in his voice, grinding against Will slowly as he devoured the sight of Will's reaction with his eyes, not missing a moment of it.

"Either take me now or take me home," Will groaned, pleading, hard under his jeans, feeling like he's going to explode from lust alone.

Hannibal's perfect cupid's bow lips curled into a smile against Will's and he moved one hand to Will's cock, palming it roughly through his pants, before he unzipped him. "Right here?"

"It's dark enough," Will panted, keening and jolting his hips against Hannibal's hand, wantonly.

Hannibal tugged Will's jeans down, and teased his cock with strokes of his fingertips, then gripped and stroked him.

"You need me to make you come, right here? In the park?" Hannibal whispered as he stroked, lips against Will's ear, accent thick.

"Hannibal," Will warned, knowing he could wait, but he didn't want to. "Yes, Fuck me."

Hannibal undid his own pants, nothing on beneath, as per usual, and kissed Will hard on the mouth, sucking his tongue. "Wet me, and I'll make you scream my name..."

Will groaned into the kiss, and then sunk to his knees, tugging Hannibal's cock into his mouth, sucking him down deep.

Hannibal swore under his breath, and looked down at Will, heart racing as Will sucked him. He rocked himself against Will's tongue, hand tight in his hair, then pulled him up, roughly, and slammed him against the tree with a hard kiss.

Will's pants and boxers slipped down his legs, and Hannibal lifted Will's thighs again, putting them around his hips, in a *rush*. He pushed himself into Will, roughly, no fingers, no tongue to ease the way, no time for that.

Will cried out at the pain, but was quickly subdued by the feel of Hannibal's mouth on his, and kissed as they started to fuck.

"God, Hannibal-" he grunted, back to the tree, hanging onto him with his thighs and legs.

Hannibal held Will, hands cupping his ass as he plunged all the way into him, prodding the head of his cock against Will's sensitive prostate. "Always suspected," he panted as he started to fuck Will against the tree, faces close, "you could be impulsive."

"Fuck-" Will grunted out roughly, sweating down his flannel shirt, feeling the bark of the tree dug Iinto his back, painful and pleasant all at once.

Hannibal smirked at the way Will swore, and used his hands to arch Will's hips, just so, angling him so that his cock pounded directly into Will's prostate with every slap of his hips.

"Is this the way you like it? Fast and dirty in the dark?" Hannibal purred, and bit Will's earlobe.

Will panted, a growl escaping his chest as his teeth snagged flesh on Hannibal's neck, sinking in to taste copper.

"Will..." Hannibal gasped, head falling back to let Will taste his flesh and blood as his hips sped, as though he was spurred on by the pain of Will's teeth, aroused by it.

Will could remember sinking teeth into flesh before, but this was better, spurred on by lust and need. Will felt himself start to heat thoroughly, and buck his hips against Hannibal's restraint. He came harder and faster than he meant to, spilling against himself.

Hannibal felt and heard Will come, able to feel his body flash hot and squeeze tightly around his own, teeth still in Hannibal's neck, deep enough to make blood run down to his shoulder.

"Will-" he gasped, raggedly, and pinned Will harder against the tree as he came inside him, moaning into the air in hot breaths.

Will only let go once Hannibal came, blood all over his teeth and mouth, some for, done his chin.

He licked the blood off, slowly, gazing at Hannibal.

Hannibal was panting hard, sweating and bleeding as he lowered his head to gaze at Will, stunned. He kissed the blood off of his chin, slowly, enjoying the feeling of it still oozing from his neck at the same time.

Will let out an amused huff, and kissed Hannibal slowly. "I'd do that again."

Hannibal smirked, and kissed Will's lips, slowly, moaning at the taste of fresh blood against his tongue. "I would gladly participate, whole-heartedly."

"You're going to need to clean that," Will said, kissing the spot on Hannibal neck, lapping up the blood.

"Perhaps you can help with that," Hannibal purred, stretching his bitten neck out for Will's mouth, with complete trust.

Will latched his tongue over the spot, and sucked it dry of blood, with a little groan.

"You've developed quite the taste for blood," Hannibal murmured, admiringly, purring the words.

"Your's," Will sighed, kicking his lips thoroughly.

The dogs finally looked like they had tired themselves out a little, and chewed on the sticks they broke apart, wagging.

Hannibal fixed Will's clothes, carefully, then his own, and kissed him again, slowly.

“A little," Will said, doing himself up, and helped Hannibal. "And you? Still murderous?"

"You've successfully re-directed my impulses," Hannibal said with a knowing look at Will.

"Good," Will murmured, kissing Hannibal again for it. Last thing they needed was him becoming *wanted* here too.

Hannibal laced his fingers in with Will's, and squeezed his hand, then looked back at the dogs. "Shall we find a late night grocer's?"

Will nodded, and whistled for the dogs, who came running, and he grabbed their leashes. "Somewhere dog friendly."

"I'm sure there is somewhere around here," Hannibal said, spotting the bridge that led to Uptown.

"We can keep looking, it's not *too* late," Will said, tugging on the leashes to keep them in line.

Hannibal took Imago's leash, and Buster's walking them so that Will didn't have all the dogs. "Any particular cravings?"

"Something not canned," Will sighed, not that he minded it, but fresh sounded better.

"I've done my best to keep you well fed," Hannibal said, haughtily, but a smile tugged at the corner of his mouth.

"One might think you were trying to fatten me up," Will sighed, though true enough, in the last few weeks he'd been hard pressed to eat more than a meal a day, supplementing with shots of whiskey,

"On the contrary, if anything, you've lost some weight," Hannibal said, arm around Will's back.

"You aren't attempting to remedy that?" Will quipped, and squeezing Hannibal's hand.

He'd had Molly feeding him tuna sandwiches and such for weeks, but he hadn't been eating them, feeding them to the dogs mostly.

"I don't want you falling ill, or developing scurvy," Hannibal said, with a little concern.

Will rolled his eyes at Hannibal, and spotted a grocery store that allowed therapy and guide dogs, and lucky for Will, Alana had long since written him off on having many, and even carried that paperwork with him. "We can go in here."

Hannibal opened the door and held it for Will and the dogs, and took a deep breath of air when he stepped through. He could already smell a lot of fresh food, a decent butcher's counter, and bakery. "This will do."

Will grabbed a cart, and tied Lucy and Winston to it, so he could push it, and they were good enough dogs to heel when he needed them to. "Where to first?"

"The butcher's counter, if Buster has his way," Hannibal chuckled, watching the intrepid dog pull him toward the smell of meat.

"Buster..." Will warned, a tone he never used on anyone but the dogs when they got in trouble. He steers them that direction.

Buster looked back at Will, like a bad kid, and slowed down a little before they reached the well-stocked counter.

"Bacon-wrapped steak, that might be what he's after."

"I wouldn't doubt it," Will said, and nudged the little pup with his foot, consolingly.

Buster sat in front of the glass, wagging as Hannibal spoke to the butcher, ordering several parcels worth of meat. "And a few good bones for the dogs if you have any."

Will walked the counter, but let Hannibal order as he wished, and then walked toward the fresh produce, tossing in a few things he knew Hannibal cooked with that wouldn't spoil too soon.

Hannibal caught up to Will and put the meat in the basket of the cart, away from the dogs. "Shallots? I wasn't aware you paid attention to what I use."

"Sometimes," Will said, shrugging, having spent a long time studying Hannibal, which meant paying attention to the little things.

Hannibal looked very pleased at that, and snuck a kiss from the side of Will's neck. "I consider that a compliment," Hannibal said, as he looked at more produce.

Will dropped a few apples into a paper bag and sat it into the cart, green ones that would go well in a salad, and then bagged a fresh head of romaine while he was at it. "You would."

"Was it not intended as one?" Hannibal asked with a soft smile, always amused by Will's prickly nature. He considered a basket of berries, and added them to the cart.

Will vaguely wondered if their money would even be useful here, and frowned at their cart. "I didn't even say anything. It was an action."

Hannibal added a few more things and pushed the cart to the bakery section, glowing a little. "Actions always have meaning."

"I prefer actions," Will said, letting Hannibal push, and he took the leashes, and he found no one bothered to ask them to leave, but maybe that was the impression they gave up that they were not to be trifled with.

The still bloody bite might have added to that impression, admittedly.

Hannibal picked up a baguette, and smelled it, then added it to the cart.

The bite oozed a little, but Will hadn't paid it much mind, just as he paid no mind in Florence to his appearance after being pushed from a train and left bruised and bloody.

"I'm not good at either one," Will admitted with a sigh, eyeing the cheeses not far from there location, and remembered he'd put figs in the cart, and went to look.

"I think you are," Hannibal said, confidently, as he looked over the wine selection with a little frown.

Will picked out an aged Brie, and slipped it into the cart, and then a jar of local honey, and put his hand on Hannibal's lower back. "Hardly upper class..."

"Hmm," Hannibal agreed, and selected one, reading the bottle before he selected another, and seemed to approve. This will do."

Will gave Hannibal a look, and shook his head, as they kept walking. "Think we have enough to hold us over? We still have a lot of stuff, coffee..."

"We should be alright, for a couple days at least," Hannibal said without irony as they headed to the cashier together. He spotted a package of tennis balls hanging near the candy, and took them, smoothly.

"You're getting soft," Will mentioned, placing everything down on the belt to get to the checker, who started to scan everything into bags.

"I am *not*," Hannibal protested, as he put the balls on the counter and helped Will, gracefully.

"Mhm," Will hummed, and let Hannibal finish, watching the screen with everything ringing up, and pulled out his wallet, only cash on him, since he was sure the debit and credit cards would not work here.

"If they chew these, it will spare the rugs," Hannibal argued, softly, like he was trying to convince himself.

"I see," Will said fondly, pulling his glasses out to see the till screen better, and placed the money down for the girl, and put his wallet back into his pocket, and started to bag it up for her.

Hannibal helped, following Will's cue in bagging his own food for once, and watched as the girl batted her eyes at Will.

"Here's your change, sir."

Will glanced over his glasses at her and took the change offered and stuffed it into his pocket. "Thanks," he murmured, and grabbed two of the four bags, juggling them with the dog leashes, ignoring the girl completely.

Hannibal smirked to himself when Will did that, and took most of the bags in arm, carrying them for his boyfriend.

Will whistled at the dogs who had stopped to smell the other human behind the counter, and they piled in in front of them and out the door.

"I felt like I was having an Indiana Jones moment, all she needed was my name on her eye lids," Will bemoaned, clearly not amused with it.

"You noticed," Hannibal chuckled, and smiled at Will as they walked.

"I was wondering if I had to show her our facebook status." Will rolled his eyes. "It’s not oblivious. It rolled off her like an awful perfume cloud," Will grimaced, like that sort of feeling was often not tasty to feel in his own mind.

"That rolled off of her, too," Hannibal muttered, and leaned over, managing to kiss Will over the bags in his arms.

Will smiled a little, still not used to all this affectionate loving and kissing in public, as he and Molly never did a lot of that. Maybe that was the problem. "Thought I smelled something."

"It was a mixture of cotton candy and imitation rose, heavily chemical," Hannibal sighed, wrinkling his nose.

Will chuckled, keeping the antsy dogs in line as they walked back toward the dock, the way they came, careful of the night that seemed to hood the city in a dangerous feeling cloud. "Couldn't have been more than twenty one..."

"Your large, luminous eyes make you look younger than you are," Hannibal said, honestly.

"My what?" Will laughed, showing the lines around his eyes and mouth. "Please."

"It is true," Hannibal said, a little offended that Will would laugh away his sincere compliment. "You have beautiful, wide eyes, they make you look very youthful, particularly your eyelashes."

Will blushed, though in the dark it was difficult to tell. He ducked his head, leading them down a right turn, docks straight ahead. "A few years maybe, but not as young as she was."

"No, but many girls prefer older men," Hannibal said casually, having noticed that first hand. "I cannot blame her for her taste."

Will narrowed his on Hannibal, darkly, blue hues bright in the dark despite it. "I guess you would know."

Hannibal smiled over at Will, and raised one eyebrow. "To which statement are you referring?"

"Older men statement. Alana is younger than I am." Will kept walking, he still held an ounce of resentment there, and he'd long forgiven Alana since she had no idea how close they were.

Hannibal sighed, and looked sideways at Will. "I would have had no interest in Alana if you hadn't had an interest in her."

That was messed up, and exactly the reason he knew that keeping Molly and Walter was futile in the end. Hannibal was a jealous beast, and Will right there with him. They'd be playing this game forever if he had not just given into the inevitable.

Will nodded, and walked them to the boat, picking up Imago as he hefted himself into the deck, and reached his hand for Hannibal's to help him and the other dogs over.

Hannibal took Will's hand, and climbed aboard, then set the bags down and jumped back onto the dock, picking up Imago and handed him to Will, then Buster, then Winston.

"Are you still sore about Alana?"

All dogs on board, Will held Imago in his arms and looked at Hannibal imploring, but with ease. He shook his head.

"No. Sore for her maybe, but she is happy now."

"She is," Hannibal nodded, and got on board, gracefully, able to move like a dancer, never a movement wasted or out of place. "And more importantly to me, so are you."

Will bit his tongue about being happy before all this,because it was only partially true. Instead, he opened the after unlocking it and helped Hannibal set things down. "You weren't going to kill her were you?"

Hannibal shifted his mouth, and looked down, then at Will. "I had promised to, the night I left for Florence," Hannibal said, quietly.

Will nodded, starting to put things away, silently as the dogs tagged at his feet. Alana and him didn't stay close, not since Hannibal came between them, but he respected her. "I know you meant to keep that promise."

"I did," Hannibal nodded, and stepped closer to help Will put things away, enjoying the domesticity of it. "But having been her charge for the last three years has shown me that she is a stern, but /air caretaker. I would not deprive a boy of his mother, particularly when he has Verger genetics in play."

"He has two," Will reminded Hannibal at his softness for sparing Alana what would be his wrath. Will put the meat into the fridge, and leaned in against Hannibal.

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will with a sigh. "Yes, he does," Hannibal admitted, and looked at Will with a soft gaze.

Will leaned against, and then turned, pressed against his chest, hands flat against the widespread. "Did you truly ever want children?"

Hannibal considered it, his dark eyes thoughtful as he did, even sad, with a private look to them, but he didn't pull away."Yes. I enjoyed being a father to Mischa, after our parents passed. Seeing her grow was my greatest source of pride. For a very long time the subject of fatherhood was too painful to consider, but I know I would enjoy it with you."

Will smiled at that. Not sure if he really wanted a child, if they were compatible for one or not. His eyes gleamed though, and rested their faces together. "Not sure we should genetically pass down our genes together," he chuckled, sadly.

"Afraid we might produce the ultimate predator?" Hannibal asked with a little smile, his hands at the shallow curve of Will's back.

"Afraid of the mental instability on my part," Will whispered, as Hannibal's words had been very, very true.

Hannibal touched the side of Will's face with a sigh, and kissed his cheek, then held him. "I am very stable, perhaps too stable."

Will had his moments where he was perfectly fine, but he also had the moments, especially when he was in tune with his empathy, that he was unpredictable. "Doesn't mean they'll get your good genes."

"And it doesn't mean they would inherit your instability, but I would also consider adoption," Hannibal said, honestly.

That sort of thing ran in Will's family, his father was no saint, and knew very little about his mother. "What person is going to give *us* a child?"

"There are plenty of children in the world who need homes, and parents, even unconventional parents," Hannibal said, with a little smile, and brushed Will's curls from his eyes. "Plenty of kids in the universes," he said, thick with sarcasm, but there was basis to it, and curled his fingers into the tight shirt Hannibal wore, stretched over his broad shoulders.

"Are we really talking about raising kids together?"

"Someday, yes," Hannibal nodded. "Not tomorrow, certainly, and likely not until you're assured I'm not going to bring home their errant teacher as dinner..."

Will let out a snort at that, and more of a chuckled breath than anything, palms pressed into Hannibal's chest, pushing and rubbing out to his shoulders. "We have to start with you not wanting to eat everyone who is rude to you."

Hannibal just sighed at that, but loved the feeling of Will rubbing his shoulders like that, noticing how he was drawn to them, again. "Impulse management?"

"We'll work on it." Will wasn't much better when he was pushed hard enough, like at the park, up against the tree.

"Am I a particularly troublesome stray of yours?" Hannibal asked with a smirk. "One who won't stop trying to eat your visitors?"

"Don't make me get the rolled news paper," Will teased darkly, fingers traced down to Hannibal's sides, flitting under the tight shirt to touch his hips and belly.

"I might like it," Hannibal teased back with a deep breath when Will touched his bare skin, muscles tight and sleek under his hands.

"Is that a fetish of yours, doctor?" Will whispered, eyes narrowed, like he was trying to see right into Hannibal's skull, picking apart every piece of him that he didn't quite know yet, if that were possible.

"Newspapers? No, but I have always found you particularly attractive when you're ... commanding," Hannibal purred, with molten, dark eyes.

Will bright blue eyes when dark as his pupils widened with lust, and he pushed Hannibal onto the bed, sitting. "I think you just have a fetish for me," Will said.

"I think that is extremely possible," Hannibal said as he sat on the bed, looking up at Will before he pulled him down into a kiss.

Will straddled Hannibal's lap, hands on his shoulders as he kissed him deeply, exploring his mouth with his tongue, commandingly.

Hannibal groaned, and wrapped both arms around Will's slender waist, holding him closer while he was kissed like that, his head tilted back. "Hmm..."

Will's tongue was demanding, sliding across Hannibal's, mouth open and pliant to him, and biting at his tongue in turns. The brunet slid his hands down Hannibal's waist and tugged the shirt toward his head, and off.

Hannibal put his hands up, like he was surrendering again, and let Will yank his shirt off with a happy sigh, offering his shapely lips for another kiss the moment it was over his head, his heart pounding hard under his chest.

Will kissed him again, right over and onto the bed, laying down, one hand over the spot he bit earlier, thumb pressed into it enough to hurt.

Hannibal winced and moaned, laying back on the bed as the boat rocked gently around and under them. He ran his hands up Will's back, under his shirt, palms warm against his smooth, white skin.

Sometimes, Will had to admit, he thought about choking the life out of Hannibal, in his dreams, for three years, taking back his own life. Now, all he thought about was touching him, hearing him make that noise when he hurt him, and knowing he could without causing his death.

He nipped at Hannibal's bottom lip, teeth scaling down his chin to his jaw, his neck, his throat, sinking in there.

Hannibal let out a low, breathless moan and tipped his head back, hips rising into Will's as he was bitten. "Will-"

His thumb skimmed the other bite, and then down Hannibal's throat to feel his pulse in his neck as the younger man sunk his teeth into salty skin, taking a deep inhale of Hannibal.

Will was marked to the brim all over his body from Hannibal, and he'd be made forget.

"Fuck-" Hannibal gasped, allowing a rare curse to escape, his cock /throbbing/ through his pants when Will did that, overwhelmed and turned on.

Will groaned into Hannibal's skin, licking a path down his collarbones, to this chest, kissing and biting purple little bruises in his wake. Wrapping his tongue around Hannibal's nipple, he twisted the other between his fingers, teeth grazing the pink flesh. He skimmed his jean clad hips against Hannibal's, grinding down against him, wantonly.

Hannibal's hair-covered chest rose and fell, deeply, and his hands scrabbled against Will's back, moaning when his nipple was bitten and sucked. That seemed, from his reaction, that

they were especially sensitive from the jerk of Hannibal's hips.

Will's eyes lifted to look at Hannibal, to watch his reactions, still very new to this side of their ever deepening relationship. He drank in the reactions, and furthered them, biting Hannibal's nipple, and twisting the other as he all but dry humped the man below him.

Hannibal's eyes went dark, and he stared down at Will, clinging to his hips, his cock wet at the tip, through his pants. "Harder," he panted.

Will bit hard enough to draw blood around the pink, tight skin, and sucked, scratching blunt nails down his other one, and then down to his hip, undoing his pants.

Hannibal arched up his hips, eager, panting and flushed all over from rushing blood. "I love your teeth."

Will moved on to the other nipple, breaking skin there too as he sucked, pushing Hannibal's pants down to his thighs, wrapping a free hand around his cock, and pumping it slowly with expertly calloused hands.

Hannibal moaned, whorishly, long legs kicking his pants off, then spreading for Will as he watched him stroke his cock. "Will-"

Will moved between Hannibal's legs, still fully dressed. He gripped Hannibal's hips and pulled his thighs over his own, dipping low to bite at each nipple once, and splayed a hand into his chest hair, watching him come undone like this.

Hannibal had feathery streaks of blood all over his tawny skin, oddly beautiful as his chest heaved. He wrapped both strong, bare legs around Will's hips, clinging to him, rutting against him through his pants.

Small enough, Will slid down between the grips of Hannibal's thighs, dipping his mouth against his hip, biting at the bony thing, drawing a purpling bruise there too, and then his thigh, utterly enthralled with the man below him, open and naked for his every whim.

Hannibal grunted and arched, tight stomach flat and smooth as he did. "Please," the rare word, at least in bed, escaped Hannibal's lips.

Will breathed against Hannibal's cock, and spread the tip of his tongue against his balls instead, slowly, just once. "What do you want me to do, Hannibal?"

Hannibal leaned up against one taut arm, his eyes half-closed when Will breathed on him like that.

Will asking him that, from between his legs, was the sort of thing he'd dreamed about.

"Wet me, then ride me."

Will wrapped his hot mouth around Hannibal's cock, and sucked, lathing and dripping saliva down Hannibal's cock, squeezing his balls with one hand, and then down his ass to dig his nails in.

"Will," Hannibal sighed, and spread his shaking thighs, wide, hips reaching up, desperate for more of Will's beautiful mouth and tongue.

Grunting, Will took Hannibal down, close to choking, and reached between his own legs to undo his jeans, and slid out of them. He sucked two of his own fingers, gazing at Hannibal, and then pressed them into himself, slowly, with a gasped, and returned to blowing the older man.

"Beautiful," Hannibal moaned, hand lost in Will's hair as he thrust up, against his rough tongue.

Will groaned, spreading himself with slick fingers, bright blue, lust driven eyes watching Hannibal's through a mess of curls as he sucked, lewdly, over and over, tonguing the tip.

Hannibal gasped, and shuddered when Will did that, fighting not to come right then and there.

"Ride me, now, *Will*-"

Will was sucking Hannibal hungrily, like he might just *eat* him. Eyes hooded, Will pulled his fingers from his ass and crawled over Hannibal, and sunk down over him, quite the domestic sight with his shirt hanging off his frame, covering his torso, hands on Hannibal's bloody chest.

"Hannibal-"

Hannibal's shaking hands gripped Will's hips, and he started to thrust into him, impatiently, hips slapping his ass as he almost glared up at Will.

Will let his fingers grab desperately at Hannibal's chest hair, hauling himself up on his haunches and then down again, over and over like that, meeting Hannibal's hips each time, until it was no more than a vibration of a rhythm.

Hannibal was desperately turned on, and rough, lips and cheeks dark with rushing blood as the bites Will left on him swelled with bright red, glistening.

"Will-" he moaned, unable to stop himself, able to feel his body squeeze and shake.

Will finally threw off his shirt, over his head, and to the floor, cock slapping against Hannibal's belly every time their hips met and smacked, nothing but skin slick between them, friction. Will let his hands slide to the well bitten spots, scratching at them with blunt nails, groaning, head canted back.

Hannibal growled at the pain, which came just at the right time, flesh ripping as his body climaxed. "WILL-"

Will felt the pulsing through his insides, fingers gripped into the wounds, as he gasped, and spilled all over Hannibal's stomach, eyes squeezed painfully shit to the white hot heat engulfing him.

Hannibal managed to look up at Will through the orgasmic haze he was in, watching him come, blood on his fingertips, under his nails, *Hannibal's* blood.

"Will," Hannibal said again, softly, and pulled Will into laying over him.

Will's come spread against Hannibal's stomach with his blood as Will laid over him, belly to belly, and kissed him roughly at first, still breathing fast, and then slowly, working down to something more tender.

Hannibal's lips matched the pace until they were brushing against Will's while they both caught their breath.

He cupped Will's face with both hands, and rested their faces together. "Never leave."

"Where would I go?" Will whispered, having given up everything but a few of his dogs for Hannibal.

Hannibal swallowed, and smiled a little, then kissed Will again, softly. He enjoyed the sting and burn of the new bites, the bruises around his nipples, and blood on his skin. "You are beautiful when you're vicious."

Hannibal had not seen Will at his very worst yet, just the aftermaths, and the points before it ever happened, but never /with/ him. Will could easily sink into a sick vicious cycle of death and murder, unrelenting, should he find the need to.

He huffed a breath through his nose, and pressed his tongue against one of the bites on Hannibal's neck. "You..."

Hannibal all but purred when Will did that. "Hm?"

"You bring out the best while simultaneously bringing out the worst in me," Will whispered with a sigh, lathing the spot 'clean' with his tongue.

"I think it's all the best," Hannibal sighed, and snuggled into Will, bloody, bitten up, and very, very happy at the moment.

Will groaned and slid off Hannibal, curling up against him, bloody and sticky now, inside and out, but couldn't be bothered to clean up just yet. "Says you."

Hannibal groaned, softly, when Will moved off of him, but curled around Will, long limbs encompassing his lithe body. "I thought you trusted my opinion," Hannibal purred.

"When it's unbiased," Will countered, eyes tracing the lines in Hannibal's face, fondly, brighter now against flushed, sweaty skin.

"I am afraid that is impossible where you are concerned," Hannibal said, and kissed Will's forehead.

Will snuggled into Hannibal, a warm body next to him, that he'd grown used to, arm hooked around him, one leg over his hip.

He was comfortable and content, but still waiting for the other shoe to drop, for the knife to come out, the bonds to be strapped on, the needle to slide a little deeper-- to wake from his blissful nightmare into a worse one.

"Do you need me to tend to these?" he asked, quietly, kissing one of the bites.

Hannibal was waiting for something to go wrong, too: for Will to pull away, for him to drop another knife meant for him, for Jack to be waiting for him with Alana at the table when he brought dinner from the kitchen area.

He feared almost nothing, save for Will's rejection or betrayal. For the moment, however, they seemed to trust each other.

"That might be wise, an infection would be an unfortunate complication, even if I wouldn't mind a scar at all."

Their mutual distrust was creating a blinding force for Will not to feel it, and he got up, to get the kit from the under the sink, squatting low to find it, and then returned to the bed with it.

"Can't have the doctor down for the count," Will said, quietly, leaning over Hannibal as he first wiped him down with a clean cloth, and then took out the little alcohol wipes, unwrapping them one by one to clean the spots he ravaged raw.

Hannibal watched Will go to the sink, and watched him come back, then let Will tend to him, with a little smile in his eyes that had been absent when Bedelia did the same, once. "I am unaccustomed of someone patching my wounds."

"Least I can do after making them," Will whispered, and started to soothe some antiseptic into the spots, carefully.

"Very fair-minded of you," Hannibal said, and his eyes went to the scar across Will's forehead, remembering when he had done the same.

It was the only wound Hannibal made that he had attended to himself. The others, like the one that laid bare across his stomach, was patched by an emergency surgeon, who did a fairly good job, all things considered.

Will was quiet for a bit, as he worked, and then got up to throw away the little empty packages that scattered the bed, and set the kit back under the sink.

He used the bathroom, and then crawled back into bed with Hannibal, under the covers.

"Thank you," Hannibal whispered as he pulled Will into his arms again, and looked at him close up, his heart beating contently. "You did a very good job."

Will could read it now that his own distrust had settled, he could feel Hannibal's, and kissed him. "We need to get over this somehow, or we'll never be happy. Not really."

"The fear that the other shoe will drop?" Hannibal asked, softly, not having to guess at what Will meant at all. "Our balance, our peace is still in it's infancy," Hannibal said, softly, looking into Will's blue eyes.

"Perhaps all that is required is letting it mature. Each hour, each day that passes without me gutting you, or you delivering me into capture is a reassurance that it is no longer our habit to hurt each other."

"Maybe." Will gazed at Hannibal, knowing he was right though, he had to stop doing this-- they had to stop doing this-- and just enjoy things. It would even out. Hannibal's eyes melted when Will said the words, and he kissed his forehead scar, very, very tenderly.

"I love you too," Hannibal whispered. "We have unusual hearts, both of us. It follows that our love for each other could never be ... typical."

Typical wasn't them. Will it never would be. Will would always wonder what it would feel like to slide his hands over Hannibal's throat, blocking his air, and Hannibal would just encourage him. That's how they were, darkness and more darkness. Delighted and more delighted by the turns of it.

Will shivered at the kiss, and closed his eyes, like it was a drug he needed, soaking it in.

"No. It never could be."

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

> Again, please note this was written in role play format almost two years ago. The roleplay also takes place in a larger fandom base in another universe where super heroes and the like exist. This is technically a cross over, you might just see some of the others pop up from here on out.

Will had asked Hannibal to run the grocery list this time alone, trusting he could do that without getting carried away. He'd given him cash, the last of what he had brought with him. He supposed he'd have to take up some kind of work soon. He'd already been actively approached by Jim Gordon, the city's commissioner, who apparently worked with another Jack Crawford.

Will was never going to get away from him. He was still considering the offer, figuring he'd butter up the birthday boy first before giving telling him about it.

Will down two fingers of the bourbon he'd set in a glass tumbler, now waiting for the very small convection oven to finish baking the pineapple upside down cake he'd some how managed to throw together, with a bourbon glaze. It smelled alright, sweet and delicate, more than he could say for either of them.

Especially himself, leaving his wife for a serial killer.

On good days he didn't think about it. Today was not one of them, wrapped around Dolarhyde's mindset again, trying to be useful to local authorities and Captain freaking America. He wanted to laugh at how stupid he was, thinking they could fit in here with the likes of heroes that he knew only to exist in fiction.

Even Batman.

He started at his empty glass and popped the top of the bottle off and poured more. His fourth since he started this baking venture.

The timer dinged, and he took two pot holders and dragged the heavy dish out and set it on the burner to cool. He threw back the bourbon, and set the glass in the sink, and will stop gazed up at him like he was worried.

"Don't look at me like that."

The cabin door opened, and Hannibal carried bags of groceries down the stairs, which set Buster hopping around with joy, followed by Imago.

"I assume you were speaking to one of the dogs," Hannibal said, his impeccable hearing good enough to hear Will mutter through the door.

"Mhm," Will sighed, wiped his mouth with his fingers, and Lucy kept at her spot, eyes on Imago like it was her own puppy.

Winston laid at Will's feet, even after Will had chided him.

"I was."

"It smells sweet, and a little like ... bourbon?" Hannibal asked as he walked closer to Will and set the groceries down.

"It's bourbon pineapple upside down cake," he muttered, and took some of the bags to start putting them away.

"Gives it a kick. I guess."

Hannibal leaned in to kiss Will on the lips, one long arm around his waist to pull him close, and as he had smelled from the door, tasted quite a bit of bourbon on Will's tongue.

He kissed him thoroughly anyhow, and then nuzzled him.

"Thank you for making it, I look forward to sampling a piece," Hannibal said, looking at Will with the same expression Winston gave him.

Will let his busy hands fall idle when Hannibal kissed him thoroughly as if trying to suck the taste completely from his mouth. He was flushed from the alcohol, and even more crimson now that Hannibal had kissed him.

"I hope it's good."

"I'm sure it will be," Hannibal said, looking at Will's slightly bloodshot eyes.

"Did you have more nightmares?"

"Been havin' 'em," he answered, licking his bottom lip to taste Hannibal there instead of the lingering sting of the alcohol.

"Does the bourbon help?" Hannibal asked, gently, aware of the nearly empty bottle on the counter.

"It helps to chase away the demons for a while," he slurred, just a little. Will kept a stash of alcohol around the boat, had since he left Molly, and mostly because he couldn't sleep well otherwise.

Hannibal sighed, and gave Will a glass of ice water.

"What exactly are you attempting to chase away?"

"The... berating at the back of my mind," he said, honestly, taking the glass in one hand, gazing down at it and not Hannibal.

"Constantly feels like someone tapping around my skull and whispering."

"What do they whisper?" Hannibal asked, and pulled out a kitchen chair for Will, offering to sit with him if he sat down. He was a little unsteady.

Will swallowed some of the water, only to wish it had been the rest of the bottle, but sat down instead, head in his free hand as he bent over a little.

"That I'm a, uhm... failure. I can't keep myself away, I can't keep promises. I'm useless...."

Hannibal sat down across from Will, leaning closer to him as he watched Will's misery leaking through the bourbon-haze.

"That you cannot keep yourself away from me, and you cannot keep your promise to Molly."

"Mhm," was the hum of reply, and Will pinched the bridge of his nose, and rubbed at his eyes.

"A disappointment to Jack. A terrible friend to Alana."

Hannibal let out a heavy sigh.

"You fall short of the man you wish you were," Hannibal said, able to guide Will through his own mind. He knew it well enough by now that it was almost like his own.

Will shook his head and looked at Hannibal, jaw stiff, tight. He'd been trying to keep all of this to himself.

"I've fallen short of a lot of things for a long time, Hannibal. It's nothing new. Just the voice..."

The voice.

"You have never heard this voice in your head before, Will?" Hannibal asked, edging his chair closer.

Will scanned Hannibal's eyes.

"No. It was quiet when we left, but now it's... back."

"He is berating you for leaving Molly," Hannibal murmured.

"I wonder if the alter who spoke to me has suddenly begun to long for the domestic life."

"Or berating me for leaving and not finishing it the way he wanted to," Will said, plainly, still remembering the texts that alter had sent to Molly.

"Or, he's just trying to get to me."

Hannibal reached across the table, and took Will's hand.

"Perhaps, like Francis Dolarhyde's alter, your alter is an abusive presence."

Will wanted to crawl across the table and into Hannibal's lap, but bit the inside of his lip inside, and laced their fingers together.

"You said yourself he wanted to hurt me."

Hannibal sighed and hugged Will to him, never an affectionate person, but Will was different, he never minded holding him.

"I had hoped perhaps he was gone."

"Back in side the mouth of madness," Will said, knowingly, resting his head against Hannibal's shoulder, chin canted up a little to look at his perfect face.

"Hopefully they find him and there won't be a need for my help anymore."

"I will hunt for him myself if it will make this new part of your mind rest and allow you to live," Hannibal sighed.

"Captain America and pal are taking care of it, I think," Will murmured, licking his bottom lip, and sat up, looking Hannibal in the eye.

"I didn't mean to damper your birthday."

Hannibal shook his head and looked at his drunk boyfriend with a slight smile.

"I'm relieved. I was worried for a moment that you were going to tell me you missed your wife."

If he had thought he would miss his wife, he wouldn't have made the choices he had, and would have never admitted to Hannibal his feelings.

Will was nothing if not honest these days.

"I do not miss tuna casserole."

Hannibal held Will tighter and rested his head against Will's shoulder with a sigh, nose against his neck.

"I sincerely hope not."

Will closed his eyes at the feeling, head and mind feeling wavy, and disconnected, blissfully, for now.

"What do you want for your birthday, Hannibal?"

Hannibal closed his eyes and nuzzled the side of Will's neck.

"Precisely this, to hold you while you are struggling not to seem as drunk as you are, while the cake you've made for me cooks in the oven."

"Cake is cooling," Will murmured, swallowing thickly, and grabbed his water, drinking it down as Hannibal's nose rested against his throat.

"I'm... not that drunk."

Hannibal laughed against Will's neck and looked at him.

"No? You'll have to prove your assertion, Will."

He dribbled some water down his scruffy chin, and set the water down with a clank, and put his hand back on Hannibal's shoulder, and looked back at him, eyes a little glassy.

"Going to give me a sobriety test?"

Hannibal stood gracefully and brushed the water from Will's chin with an amused smirk.

"Are you able to walk a straight line?" Hannibal asked, then peeked in the oven at his cake.

The oven was off, the cake was sitting and keeping warm, caramelizing the booze and sugars together with the pineapple and cherries.

Will felt his eyes unfocus for a moment as Hannibal stood in front of him, watching the hard lines of his body move under the clothes he borrowed indefinitely from Will.

"And if you can make a cake, you're not intoxicated?" Hannibal asked, amused.

"Not 'nough to not be able to bake," he tried to reason, but the reasons were starting to fail him as they left his tongue, leaving a bitter feeling there.

Hannibal nodded, understandingly, and got Will another glass of ice water.

"Is the terrible voice quieter now, under the weight of the Bourbon?"

Will took the offered glass, able to tell even in his current inebriated state that Hannibal wasn't pleased with his behavior.

"Yes."

"I am certain you will re-think your choice of coping mechanism tomorrow," Hannibal sighed. "You didn't want to tell me, why?"

"I thought it would go away," he said, murmured around the glass as he chugged the water down, which only made him feel a little nauseated.

"You could probably take the cake out."

Hannibal kept looking at Will, then back at the oven, and sighed at Will.

"I will, soon enough."

Hannibal wrapped an arm around Will and guided him to the small couch.

"I am not sure it will go away, Will. Not without addressing the central issue."

"It's a mind set I have to get away from," he murmured, letting Hannibal move him, almost tripping over his own foot, but managed.

"You're not happy with me," he said, quietly, looking at Hannibal up close.

"I am worried about you, Will," Hannibal said, and caught Will easily, then sat with him on the couch.

"I am worried that your latent self-loathing has found a voice, that you are following Francis's example."

Will licked his teeth, catching his tongue between it thoughtfully. Hannibal wasn't wrong, it was all the pent up voices he's accumulated over the years.

"With out a becoming it wouldn't be very beautiful, would it? To crash and burn."

"To burn out, sputtering like a wet match, drowned in bourbon and self-hatred."

Hannibal sighed, looking at Will closely.

"That is not the becoming I want for you."

No, it was the one Will wanted when Hannibal left him gutted on his kitchen floor.

Will touched Hannibal's face, and slid it back behind his head and pulled him closer, determined not to make this his birthday present, it wasn't how he pictured it.

"And what if that is what I'm becoming?"

Hannibal shook his head, and kissed Will's lips, softly, staying close to him.

"I refuse to allow you to become lost in the intricate maze of your own mind, Will. The way through this is to address your self-loathing, pull it into the light, determine if you are right it despising yourself as you do."

Self-deprecation was a specialty of Will Graham's, and even in his haze he could feel it and wished he couldn't it. He gripped the tight shirt on Hannibal's back, kissing him back with an open mouth, seeking comfort in his lover.

"I'm trying."

Hannibal kissed his bourbon-soaked lover back, cupping his face with one hand as he pulled Will into his lap again, holding him.

"I'm hardly opposed to bourbon, but I do not want you hiding in it."

"I'd rather hide in you," he admitted with a small whisper, crawling into Hannibal's lap, facing him, and kissing one of the spots he bit to bleed the other night.

Hannibal's eyes closed as he sighed, and he turned his head to kiss Will's lips again, slowly.

"I cannot argue with that..."

He could, technically, but didn't want to.

The voice seemed to loath Hannibal, and the closer he was with Hannibal, the louder it got, but the more Will felt like he might break it. Nothing he did the voice liked anyway, why start caring?

"Cake first?" he asked, between sloppy kisses, long and drawn out.

"Please," Hannibal smiled, and kissed Will again, not letting go.

"I don't think it would be a bad idea to allow me to serve it..."

"I wouldn't trust my hands to grab it or use a knife," Will said, honestly now, head swimming pleasantly for now.

Hannibal chuckled and kissed Will's cheek.

"I admire your persistence in making it."

"I hope it tastes good."

Will nuzzled his half self against Hannibal, like a dog, and rolled off of him, so he could get the cake. Food in his system was a good idea anyway.

Hannibal gave Will a little smile as he stood, clearly very in love with the man, and went to the oven to remove the cake, admiring it.

"A nice golden-brown color on top..."

Will laid against the couch, Dogs curling up on his sides.

"That doesn't mean anything."

"It is better than black," Hannibal said and took two small plates out of the cupboard, serving some of the cake onto each. The bottom was gooey and brown, but the cake looked edible enough, a little flat, maybe, but nice looking.

"I must admit, I have never had this sort of cake before."

"You never had a pineapple upside down cake?" Will laughed, something from inside his chest, and sitting with his legs spread on the couch, hands between them, head back.

"It's a little white trash."

"Is it always prepared with bourbon?" Hannibal asked, and brought Will a piece of cake, then sat with him with his own, not even going to try to make Will sit at the kitchen table for this.

"It's how my dad made it," he said, quietly, and took the cake, looking at it, and took a bite with the fork provided.

Hannibal's eyes smiled at Will, dark, and shiny as he realized Will gave him his childhood birthday cake.

He took the fork and took a bite of the sweet and tangy cake, strongly flavored with bourbon, then swallowed.

"I love it. Thank you."

The bourbon might have been heavy handed by the time he got to it, but... that was part of the process, honestly.

Will hummed around it.

"You don't have to lie..."

"It's very good," Hannibal said, honestly, unable to distinguish whether he liked it because it was meaningful, and Will made it for him ... drunk, or because it was actually good.

"Too sweet to have a large piece at a time, but I like it," he assured Will.

Will let out a little chuckle, eating another bite, his piece not too big, luckily.

"My dad never made much. Fish and chips, this cake, for my birthday. That was it."

"Have you ever made this before?" Hannibal asked, curiously.

"No." He sighed, looking at it, not sure it looked right.

"I found a recipe that seemed right, very southern, full of lots of alcohol."

Hannibal could read a lot into anything, and he blushed a little as he ate another bite, realizing that Will had never made this for Walter or Molly, only him.

He felt his throat tighten. Will would make this for /family/. It was something from his ch...See More

It was a cake that his father made drunk, or hungover, but he made it no matter what happened, for Will, every birthday since his mother left.

Which was since he could remember.

Will barely kissed Hannibal back, but leaned into him, finishing his cake.

"Yeah?"

"Yes, just this way," he said, happily and quietly, and watched Will finish his cake, then finished his own and looked at his plate, like he was trying to remember the way the crumbs were arranged. He took both of their dishes to the sink and came back with a glass of wine for himself, and a glass of water for Will, and sat down again, very close to Will on the couch.

"Why?" Will felt humbled, but he knew the cake wasn't that good, and he was too drunk to realize it.

Objectively, the cake was nothing great. The bourbon was overpowering, the pineapple almost tasteless when soaked with it, and the cake itself was dry and without decent rise to the dough, rather heavy ... but Hannibal loved it.

"It is something you wanted to share with me," Hannibal said after sipping his wine.

"You made for me what made you feel special, as a child. That is an intimate thing."

Will smiled, sadly, looking at Hannibal, glass of water held tight in his hands.

"It is. I've never told anyone or shared it with anyone."

Hannibal kissed Will again, the light, elegant wine on his lips contrasting with the bourbon on Will's.

"Then I am honored you would share it with me."

Will parted his mouth to taste Hannibal's tongue, perhaps a little more daring and open like this. He had not planned to tell Hannibal why this sort of cake, it just slipped out.

"I'll make it better next year."

"Regardless, thank you," Hannibal murmured, and kissed Will again, gently, already anticipating the hangover he'd have the next day.

"I will have to make you a few things from Lithuania. I doubt you had time to sample any of the local fare when you visited."

Will drank the water, sat the glass down and curled into Hannibal, with a sigh, kissing him slowly.

"No. There wasn't much hospitality."

"It's very simple, unsophisticated food," Hannibal sighed, with a little roll of his eyes.

"There is a reason I fell in love with the more complex palate of the French, in particular."

His eyes softened as he remembered Mischa, however, and making her potato pancakes himself in the kitchens because she claimed it tasted better when he did it.

"Sounds like comfort food then, like southern food." Will liked that sort of food, it was easy and simple, less complex. His brain worked in complexities, he didn't really need more of it in his mouth.

"Perhaps, yes, without the spices. You might like it," Hannibal said, softly, and used his hand to rub the muscles in the back of Will's neck.

Will curled in like a dog, or a wolf, and snuggled up to Hannibal, head on his shoulder as the other man drank his wine.

"What else do you want for your birthday?"

"I purchased a few clothes already," Hannibal said, nodding to a couple of bags.

"Perhaps a nice meal somewhere close, if you are feeling up to it."

"Give me a few hours to shake off this drunk," he admitted, finally, though already feeling it fading, making him tired.

"Would you like to sleep?" Hannibal asked, able to feel the answer in the way Will's body sagged against him.

"Only if you want," he murmured, willing to stay away for Hannibal, it was his birthday.

"I wouldn't mind a nap with you," Hannibal said, stroking Will's hair with his fingers.

Will smiled and stood, a little off kilter, and took Hannibal's hand, leading him, not far, to the little bed that was theirs.

Hannibal smiled at how unsteady Will was, and followed him, taking off his shoes before he climbed into bed and pulled WIll in with him, hugging him to his chest with a happy sigh.

"There, much better."

Will hunkered down, snuggling up to Hannibal, head on his chest, listening to his heart beat, one arm around his middle, keeping him locked there.

"Much."

"Hopefully when you wake, you will not feel too terrible," Hannibal mused, mentally calculating Will's weight with the estimated amount of drinks and how much water he got him to consume.

Will chuckled at that, sighing as he resigned to trust Hannibal completely, falling asleep against him.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

> This is taken from an RP two years or so ago, maybe longer. Will and Hannibal live, now, in a pocket universe where Marvel and DC comic characters are real, and the fourth wall is always broken, they are very aware of themselves and that in other worlds they are fictional.

After getting a picture of Reba, finding out where Francis worked, and going to the other dimension, Steve called Bucky, hoping he wasn't busy and wanted to come help with this.

Even with the serum running through his veins, Steve knew this was going to be a team effort.

He waited, pacing as the phone rang.

"Didja find her?" Bucky asked,phone cradled between his shoulder and his ear, handing a customer change.

"Yeah, she's working today, and I found the place, are you okay to come with?" Steve asked.

"Yeah," Bucky said handing the customers items over and let them out of the store and locked it. "Text me your coordinates and I'll be there soon."

"Alright, see you soon," Steve said, and did as Bucky asked, standing outside the photo company.

Bucky made sure he had his skin looking arm on, and put on his leather armor under his clothes. He told his sister and Harvey he'd be back. He set the location, and popped up next to Steve.

"Gettin' into trouble?"

"I've been here a whole ten minutes, and somehow, no, not yet at least," Steve said with a little smirk, and showed Bucky to the main entrance.

"Photo processing?" Bucky asked, looking around, trying not to seem too... out of place.

"Yeah, they do family films, photos, stuff like that," Steve said as they walked in, garnering stares as they went. "Probably how he picks them out."

"Hi, can I help you?" a hopeful looking female employee said with a big smile.

"We're lookin' for Ms. Reba McClane," Bucky offered, a smile on his lips as he leaned one arm against the counter.

"Oh, Reba? Yeah, she's downstairs, just go down that hall, take the stairs at the end all the way to the bottom and knock on the door. She's in a dark room to process, so knock and wait until she says to come in," the lady said with a huge smile at Bucky.

"Thanks," Bucky said, and nodded at Steve, tugging on his elbow as he started for the stairs. "Nice enough people. Letting just anyone in."

"Uh huh," Steve said with an eye roll as they walked to the stairs together. "Some things never change."

"What?" Bucky gave Steve a look, rolling his eyes back at him. "Gotta get information somehow."

"Sure, sure," Steve said, teasingly, starting down the stairs. "Starting to see why your husband keeps such a close eye on you, flirt."

"I'll let you ask the questions next time then," Bucky offered, head held high. Since he'd gotten that treatment that repaired his brain damage, he'd been doing a *lot* better. He still had his highs and lows, but everything was a lot more even.

Down stairs, he found her room, and knocked on it lightly.

"You think she knows he's missing?"

"We'll find out," Steve said, quietly, and listened, able to hear movement inside.

"One minute," a female voice said from inside.

A moment later, the door opened. Reba stood there, looking at them sightlessly.

"Hello?"

"Hi, ma'am. My name is Steve, this is Bucky, we heard you are a friend of Francis Dolarhyde's."

"Francis?" she asked, obviously worried, stepping into the hall. "Have you heard from him?"

Bucky moved out of the way to let her come out into the open.

"Mister Dolarhyde went missing and we think we know where he is, but we need your help to coax him out."

Reba's mouth opened and she looked emotional for a moment, then swallowed hard and nodded.

"Yes, of course, I'll do anything to help. He's ... very sweet, deep down, but I know he has issues with his-" Reba gestured to her own lip.

She obviously didn't know. Maybe no one told her, or maybe they kept it from her.

"He's probably fine, physically. That's why we want to find him."

"Physically ..." Reba sighed. "Let me get my sweater and bag, and I'll sign out early today. Are you two police officers?"

"Something like that. We work for an agency a little higher than the police," Bucky answered, the most he could tell her while they were in plain sight.

"Oh ..." Reba said, and stepped into her dark room for a moment.

Steve looked at Bucky, concerned.

"She's really trusting."

Bucky shrugged.

"She's involved with a serial killer and doesn't know it either."

"I know, but just ... " Steve sighed, and Reba came back, bag over her shoulder, and locked the door, working by touch.

"Alright. Where do you think he is?"

"Another dimension," Bucky said, standing on one side of her. "We can take you. We think he's at a zoo there. Someone mentioned that's where he'd be, is that right?"

"Dimension?" Reba's eyebrows went up, and she laughed. "Are you from the ... X-files or something like that?"

"I know it sounds impossible," Steve said, reasonably, and calmly.

"But it's true. Francis is in a lot of trouble, and he's in our world, a world like this one, and we came here to find you to see if you could talk him into accepting help if we can find him. I swear that we won't let any harm come to you."

"Wait ... wait just a minute. Did you say your names are Steve and Bucky? My brother used to read me comic books."

"Yeah. Steve and Bucky. That's us," Bucky said without an ounce of humility to it, as if it were like this every single day.

"We really want to help Francis, Reba."

"Captain America and Bucky Barnes?" she asked, with a little laugh, and tilted her head, then reached a hand out that collided with Steve's chest.

She raised her eyebrows and patted up to his shoulder, blinking at his sheer size.

Bucky laughed; "He gets all shy when people get personal," he said quietly to Reba.

"Yeah," Reba laughed, and reached out toward Bucky. "Can I feel your left arm?" she asked, gently. "Just ... want to have a little proof before I wander off with two comic book heros."

"It's... not my metal one, it’s flesh textured," he said, trying to explain, but he rolled up his sleeve to the point where it connected to the socket, and moved her hands so she could feel the seam there, the grove where metal joined in to the base.

Reba's blind eyes widened as he felt it, and she let out a shaky laugh, then smiled. "Okay ... okay ... wow. Well, nice to meet you both. What a world we live in. Let's go."

Steve smiled and nodded, then realized Reba couldn't see that.

"We have a device that will take us to the other world, you won't feel anything, but you will have to be touching-"

Reba's hand went to Steve's huge arm immediately, with a smile.

"Okay, there you go."

Bucky was trying not to laugh and touched her shoulder gently, shaking his head at Steve. In seconds they were back in their world, outside of the zoo.

Steve was blushing, embarrassed by the attention. They transported, and he looked around as Reba took her hand back, turning her head to feel the breeze.

"Are we at a zoo? I smell animals."

"Yeah, we are. Do you know which display he prefers?"

Bucky paid their ways into the zoo, and they were let in through a gate, which he helped her find her way in.

"The tiger," Reba said, decisively, with a little smile. "He has a friend who let me pet one while it was sedated for some vet work, it was beautiful," she said, and swallowed hard.

"That was nice of him," Bucky soothed, trying to keep things calm as they made their way through the zoo, stopping only to find the way to the tigers.

"It was thoughtful," Reba said, following them with her hand against the back of Bucky's arm. "I'm used to being either pitied, or overlooked."

Steve stopped, spotting a slightly hunched man in a hoodie with the hood up. "I think that might be him."

"And Francis was neither of those things," Bucky stated back to her, able to understand why she was smitten with the man. It was too bad he was serial killer.

Steve nodded, and watched Bucky, carefully, then stepped away from Reba, not wanting to make it seem like they were together.

Bucky approached the habitat, slowly, and stood a few feet from the other man, hands in his pockets, watching the tigers prowl around and laze about.

"Beautiful creatures," he said, not looking over at Dolarhyde just yet. The tiger got up and walked toward Bucky, staring at him through the thick glass, then at Francis with big, bright eyes.

"You can look at them there without the glass, pet them..." Bucky was putting the offer there, into Francis mind, letting him think that over before he saw Reba, so he could want to take her there, peacefully.

Bucky was not going to mention anything else, not the killings, nothing.

They didn't need to set off the dragon.

"Can... anyone go?" Francis asked, and Bucky looked over at him, nodding.

"They have cubs, they're gettin' bigger now..."

Over Bucky's shoulder, Reba must have moved enough for Francis to see her, as he walked past Bucky and over to her, confused on how she got here.

"Reba..."

Reba smiled as soon as she heard Francis's voice, and she reached out a hand for him.

"There you are. I've been looking for you, and ... well that's not necessarily easy for me. Are you alright?" she asked, worried.

Bucky took very long steps to make sure they were right next to Francis, his hand on the hopper, ready to push the button for Arkham, if they needed it.

Francis was quiet, and nestled against Reba's hair, hugging her tightly.

"How did you get here?"

He still didn't know where here was, but it wasn't home.

Reba hugged Francis, tightly, squeezing him with both arms, so relieved to be with him again that she was shaking a little.

"Two men said you might be here, they offered to help me find you. They said you were in trouble, are you okay? You just vanished and I waited for you, I checked your office, I even took a cab to your house..."

Francis tensed, squeezing Reba, very aware of the two men, one he'd been talking to, and the other who was much bigger than him, height and bulk. He eyed them both warily.

"I'm fine. No trouble. We should go."

"They're nice men, they said they want to help you," Reba whispered.

"But if you want to go with me, we can think about talking to them later, maybe? It doesn't have to be now, I just want to know you are safe, I've missed you," she said, honestly, touching his chest with one hand. "Taking the bus has lost its charm."

Francis took her hand, and Bucky moved forward an inch, getting the feeling they were going to run.

"There are a few things I need to tell you," Francis said, quietly, and started to just walk with Reba slowly, not to alarm their watchers.

"Things they won't like, and they will try to take me away."

"Okay, then let's go somewhere private, maybe somewhere we can have some food, and you can tell me anything, alright?" Reba said, reasonably, and took Francis' hand, squeezing it.

Bucky moved in next to Steve, walking behind them, giving them some space, but gave Steve a look.

Francis nodded, even if she couldn't see it, and looked around. There wasn't much here, and he couldn't go out there either, his face was /everywhere/ now.

He needed to get to Doctor Lecter at some point, too. He'd understand.

"There's not much here."

"You need to sleep and to eat," Reba reminded him. "Let's go somewhere where you can do that, there must he a hotel or something, right?"

Steve listened closely, not sure if they should pounce or let Reba try to talk reason into him, she seemed to have a lot of influence.

"I don't know that I can," he said, keeping his head down, hat over his face to keep people from seeing him. "I have people after me."

"Where do these people want to take you? Why are they after you?" she asked, and Steve stepped forward a little.

"We want to take you somewhere to help you, Francis. This problem you have, this thing you've been dealing with? I have it too. Mine is named Grady," he said, honestly. "My friend Bucky back there has the same problem, we've both dealt with it, we've both been confused and scared. We don't want to hurt you, not at all, if we wanted that, we would have already. I'm a doctor, I help people like us."

Francis arm went around Reba protectively, the one thing he and the Dragon agreed on through and through was her. He glared at Steve, snarling at him, and then Bucky.

"You don't know. It's not the same!"

"No, no, it's not," Steve said, calmly, and stopped walking toward them. "Grady used to scare me, though. He used to call me weak for not being able to handle some things when I was young. He protected me, but sometimes he hurt me too. I can't possibly really understand exactly how you feel, but Bucky and me both know how confusing this condition can be. You're not alone, Francis. Let me give you and Reba a place to be together, somewhere we can help you. We are not going to take Reba away."

"I want this, I want this becoming, you don't understand!" he growled, through his teeth, slathering his words even worse than he usually did, though they were more pronounced somehow, like it was hardly him at all.

"What becoming? What do you mean?" Reba asked, with wide eyes, one hand against his chest.

"The thing... I need to explain," he said, softer to her, more reasonable than he was with Steve and Bucky, and his mind was making those connections quickly, and also realizing this was a fight he wouldn't win. He wasn't ready.

She thought for a moment, chewing the inside of her cheek.

"Francis, do you trust me?"

He tore his eyes from them and looked at her, even if she couldn't see him, and hugged her close.

"Of course I do."

"Okay," Reba whispered, and hugged Francis back, arms around his neck, able to feel he needed the comfort.

"I think these guys are telling the truth. I think if we go with them under the condition that we can leave if we decide we want to, I think it might be a good idea, okay?"

He considered, and since she was here with him, he had no choice but to. Without her, he would have run long ago.

He regarded Steve, head down, not looking at him.

"Where?"

"There are outpatient housing facilities, just built for patients of Arkham," Steve explained. "They're like little houses, you'd have your own kitchen, your own space, you and Reba could stay together, and we'd visit you and talk things through, see how we could help you. The condition would be that you would have to stay there until we knew it was safe for you to wander, that's all."

For Reba. For Reba.

The Dragon did not like this idea, it got in the way of the things they needed to do. They had less than three weeks now until a new full moon.

But... but if they got to know these people, maybe there were some families that would be ideal...

"Okay," Francis said, huffing, like he was out of breath just having that conversation with himself.

Reba smiled, and hugged Francis, then gave his cheek a kiss in gratitude.

"Thank you, this is a good idea, you'll see. Maybe I can make you some pie?" she offered.

"I'd... like that," he said, quietly, mostly to her, and then drew his attention back to the two men, waiting to see what happened now.

Steve looked a little more relaxed, and watched them before he stepped closer.

"My name is Steve, by the way, this is Bucky. I'm just going to make a call and arrange for the house for you, then we can go."

Francis Nodded, holding tight to Reba, not shaking hands, which was fine with Bucky.

"Thank... you."

"Of course," Steve nodded, and dialed his phone to speak to Bedelia, stepping away to give them some privacy.

Reba touched Frances' hands and could feel they were rough, cut in some places, like he'd handed something sharp.

"Are you hurt?"

"No. I'm Okay. Just some cuts," he said, quietly, and roughly. He kissed the top of her head. "Promise. I'll get them looked at where we go."

She nodded with a worried expression, and ran her fingers over the lines there, one arm still around him.

Steve hung up.

"They have one ready for tenants. We can travel by hopper, all you have to do is touch my arm," Steve explained, walking closer slowly, confident that Bucky had his back.

Bucky touched Steve, "Touch Reba, he can just be touching her."

Francis gave Bucky a knowing look, who just nodded. He understood.

"This is how I got here, it's okay," Reba assured Francis, and touched Steve's arm.

They all disappeared together, and reappeared in a comfortable, simple living room inside a small, but well furnished house.

"Here we are," Steve said, stepping back to let them look around.

"This is... a treatment house?" he asked, his S's were a little sloppy, and he murmured them to keep many from noticing.

"It's a therapy house," Steve nodded.

"There are many people in *this* universe who have a split, and some of them are very powerful and like to make sure everyone who needs it can get help to cope with the stress," Steve explained as Reba took her folding cane out of her bag, and used it to "look" around the room, discovering what and where the furniture was.

"A split." The word seemed to be spat out of his mouth like fire, but he kept his tongue coiled, and his rage in tact.

"A split personality," Steve nodded, keeping his voice down. "Some people have more than one, some have only one alter, that's what we call the personality who takes over sometimes."

"I've got two," Bucky said, "Charlie and Jefferson. Steve's husband has a more than that. We all suffer, but we manage."

"Suffer," Francis hissed, under his breath, letting Reba look around as he hunched his shoulders, standing in the middle of the room.

"You suffer in a different way, don't you?" Steve asked, quietly. "Your alter hates you, he thinks you need to change, right?"

"No, no...no, no..." Francis said, shaking his head, and keeping a hand up to keep Steve and Bucky back. "I want this. We're becoming. He's very particular."

"Why do you want this?" Steve asked, staying back as they talked.

"To be powerful. Almost a God," he said, looking Steve over. "You wouldn't understand. Look at you."

Steve looked at Frances, then Bucky, then back at Francis.

"I'd understand a lot more than you might think," Steve said, and pulled up an old picture of him, skinny, sickly, ribs visible through a shirt as he stood next to Bucky.

He passed his phone to Francis, letting him look.

"I was born like that. Asthma, eye problems, heart problems, under-weight, bad knees, bad feet ... bad everything."

Francis took the phone to look, and had to do a few takes of Steve, and then handed it back.

"You got lucky. You got your... becoming."

"I got shot full of serum by a bunch of scientists, then went to war to try and stop the Nazis," Steve said, in a no-nonsense tone."I watched my best friend die, crashed a plane into an

ocean on purpose and woke up seventy years later, completely confused. What I'm saying is, even if you get what you think you want ... it's not always what you want."

"Isn't it? You're still here. You have a life, with kids and husband, happiness. I've never had that."

"Not yet," Steve said quietly, and looked at Reba as she memorized the furniture with her hands, the sun in her hair. "But if you recover, you might."

"Recover? You talk like this is something I can be rid of! It's not!" He was getting angry, but looked at Reba, and lowered his voice. "He is ingrained in me, with blood and ink."

"A tattoo?" Steve asked, connecting the dots. "The tattoo only means as much as you let it mean. If you ever wanted it gone, we have people who can remove it for you, no charge. I know the dragon is a part of you, and yanking him out would kill you at this point," Steve said. "The best outcome would be to see if we can help the dragon see that you are not weak. You do not need to transform. He can live in you, and not destroy you, you can co-exist."

"You don't understand."

Francis sighed and shed his jacket, and then undid his shirt slowly, and turned his back to Steve and Bucky, slowly peeling away layers and showing them the dragon on his back. Down to his underwear, the tail of it wrapped around his leg.

Steve sighed, looking at the tattoo with dismay, and thought for a moment.

"You put that there to change your skin. That is his skin now?"

"He's always with me." He had teeth too, that were for the dragon, but they were gone, he had to get new ones at some point.

"How long has he been with you?" Steve asked, walking around Francis to look at him from the front, to see his human side.

"Since my..." he ducked his head, and pulled his clothes to him, and on again. "Five years."

"Since someone important in your life died?" Steve asked, and gave time for Francis to answer as Reba explored the kitchen.

"She wasn't important," he muttered, bitterly. "My grandmother."

"A person can be awful to you, and still be important. Important doesn't necessarily mean she was good, or right," Steve said, softly.

"She cared for me. My parents died."

He shook his head and went to find Reba, needing her solace.

Reba was feeling her way along the kitchen cabinets, and turned her head when she heard Francis's quiet approach.

"It's a nice place," she said. "Clean, big ..."

"Yeah. It is. Nothing like my place." His place was big, but not really clean.

"Your place is nice," Reba said, and walked over to Francis, slowly, following the sound of his voice.

"Big, dusty. This place is clean." He put his arm around Reba.

"It feels sunny, like it has a lot of windows. I can feel it on my skin when I pass them. I like it here, a lot," she said, and hugged him around his waist, head on his chest.

You won't miss being back home?" he asked, to only her, so only she could hear him.

"Miss being back there wondering where you are? If you're okay? No," she said, with a shake of her head.

Francis smiled a little at that and held her close. Bucky stayed back with Steve to give them some space, whispering:

"You know, he's killed people, a whole family. They're gonna lock him up, Steve."

Steve sighed and looked back at Bucky.

"If he stays in here, we don't have to. We can watch the place, we've got enough people. I think he can recover, I think he can beat this, with some help."

Steve was an optimist, and Bucky was not, that much was very clear over how they'd both come to be where they are today. He crossed his arms over his chest.

"We both know there is no recovery from this..."

"Why not? We've all gotten better at controlling our alters, why not him?" Steve asked, hating to just give up on Francis when he saw him with Reba.

"His isn't like Grady or Charlie, or any of the alters we've known from anyone here. That is a ruthless killer, not just someone trying to get Francis to do his bidding."

"So how many people has Charlie killed?" Steve asked, with a raise of his eyebrow. "How is he worse?"

Bucky's gaze narrowed on his best friend, ice cold like the color of his irises.

"I've killed more than Charlie has. More than that man in there. We have been through different things. So, his grandmother was a bitch. She probably abused him, a lot. We've been there. But we never wanted to be a... dragon. A demonic beast."

"No, none of us did, but so what? That's a pretty minor detail in the large scope of things," Steve said back, sorry that he upset Bucky, but he was telling the truth.

"Have you ever thought that HYDRA might have something to do with this? That it isn't just some mind set..." Bucky said, even quieter, remembering what they had done to someone else...

"And if it is, that's even more reason to try and help him, try to figure out what went wrong with this guy, not just ... crush him," Steve sighed.

Bucky bristled; he wanted to help this guy too, but he had a feeling it was just a matter of time before the beast branched out and lashed out.

He'd hate to see Reba get hurt.

"We'll see what happens."

"I know it's a risk, but all we can do is the best we can for him, and if she needs protecting, she's not going to find better protection than the people here," Steve reasoned, and texted a few people about taking shifts to watch the house.

"Do we call Graham? The new one? He seemed interested in what happened here." Bucky let his guard down a little, feeling less defensive. It was Steve, after all.

"Yeah, we should, he was the last to work on the case. I've got Natasha, Clint, Thor, Robin, Aragorn, and Legolas saying they will take shifts watching the house..." Steve said, ever the organizer and rallier of the troops.

He sent a message to Will.

"Plus us. What about Stark?" He'd ask about Dick, but he'd probably already be busy with work.

"I texted, just waiting to hear back when he's done ... designing whatever he's designing," Steve said with a shrug.

Bucky shook his head, and of course then Tony got back to him. He'd come, no way he'd miss something so interesting that wasn't aliens.

"I'm sure he'll want to come see just because he's Stark."

"He's coming, just replied," Steve nodded.

"Wouldn't put it past him to get curious and introduce himself, I'll have to warn him against that," he sighed, and looked around.

"Do you think she'd be offended if I offered to find her a dog?"

"Don't you think she'd have one if she wanted one? Plus Dolarhyde has a history of dog killing," Bucky pointed out.

"Oh, yeah," Steve said, a little sheepishly.

“We’ll figure all this out.”

A message was received back from Graham, he’d be there soon.

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Hannibal returned home to the boat with bags in his arms, looking calm to the point of blankness as he unpacked everything. "How is your newest rescue?"

"Sleeping," Will said, the kitten curled up in a blanket, in his lap, purring, and sleeping her little life away for the moment.

Hannibal stepped closer, and looked down at the kitten in the blanket, staring at her silently, like he was lost in memory. "It is ... appropriate that you named her Mischa. She adored the cats who lived around the castle. She wanted one to live indoors with us ..." Hannibal went quiet for a moment. "I said no."

Will canted his head at Hannibal, looking at him through the glass of his specs, which helped his headache as he could focus a little better. "Why?"

Hannibal's eyes went from cold to sad as he looked at the kitten, heavy with regret. "The cats around the castle were very wild, and very rough. I did not want her to think she was safe interacting with them, I did not want to confuse her with a kitten." He sighed, and looked away. "It's something I regret. I was young, unused to being a father."

Will nodded, he understood. His father had been like that about kittens, but mostly because his father hated cats. "You couldn't have known, and did what you thought was right."

Hannibal looked back at the kitten, and reached a hand in to pet the soft fur against the kitten's back. "Did the name come naturally to you? Why did you think of it?"

The kitten made a soft little, pitiful 'mew' noise when it was pet, and moved it head a the other direction, settling again in Will's lap. "I knew your sister's name, I thought it would be nice."

Hannibal smiled, softly when the kitten stirred, reminded of seeing Mischa as a baby, and went to the bags, bringing out a stethoscope. He warmed the bell and put it against her stomach and chest, listening. "Her lungs are clear, her heart sounds even and regular, no skips, no arrhythmia."

The kitten squirmed a little and stretched her short legs, and let out another pitiful mew. "Good. She's not sick at least."

Hannibal petted her with his finger again and listened to her lungs through her back. "The veterinarian was good enough to tell me what to look out for, and after speaking with me for a moment, offered to let me bring home the vaccinations she needs."

"You're always very convincing," Will said, with a little smile, petting down some of Hannibal's hair as he doctored the kitten.

Hannibal smiled a little, and scooped the kitten into his hands, then took her to a kitchen scale on the counter, murmuring to her in Lithuanian as he set her on it, gently. "Under six ounces. She's very, very malnourished."

"Very small. I hope you bought enough milk for her," Will said, getting to his feet, even though his head felt like it might burst.

"I did," Hannibal said as he picked her up, off the scale, and held her while he readied a thermometer. "Can you hold her, please? I need to take her temperature, she may not like this."

Will took the baby back, and snuggled her against his chest, petting her little back of soft fur, nuzzling his own fuzzy face against her head. Hannibal slipped the lubed thermometer in under her tail and petted her back as it measured her temperature, then beeped.

"Slightly above normal," he said, removing it and placing it in the sink. "But that could be from dehydration, we'll take it again after she's fed. It's not high enough to indicate pathologic infection," he murmured, and washed his hands before he drew the vaccines into the syringes. "Only two pokes."

Will held the baby as she mewed at him, little paws trying to crawl up his chest, but he kept her still for them. "Better make it quick, Doctor. I think she's hungry."

Hannibal nodded, and gave Mischa her injections very deftly and quickly, then disposed of the needles and washed his hands again, taking powder in a tin, and something that looked like goat's milk and some yogurt out of the bag.

"Dinner will be served in a minute," he promised.

Will smiled as Hannibal put together 'dinner' for their newest 'child' and went to snuggled her up in the blanket against as she shivered and whined against his chest. "Shh, shh... dinner soon," he whispered, kissing her little head.

Hannibal worked for a moment, mixing the ingredients in a small blender, then heated it over a boiling pot of water, and poured it into a tiny, sterile bottle. He tested the temperature against his wrist, and brought it to Will.

"Kitten formula with goat's milk and greek yogurt, more nutritionally dense for her than regular formula, and full of probiotics."

Will took the tiny bottle, and moved the kitten so he could feed her better, and she latched on easily, and hungrily, little tiny feet kicking as she did. "The vet told you about that?"

"The vet told me cats are lactose intolerant, I deduced the rest," Hannibal said, and sat with Will, watching Mischa suck from the bottle hungrilly. "She may have refeeding syndrome, we will have to feed her small portions once an hour."

"I don't doubt that, poor thing." Will let her guzzle down, until it was gone, not a lot to begin with, but as Hannibal said, a little at a time.

Hannibal brought a cloth and wiped her mouth for Will, then took the bottle. "You will need to pat her back over your shoulder, kittens can develop gas bubbles just as human infants do," Hannibal said calmly, and took the bottle to wash it in the sink.

Imago jumped up on the couch, sniffing the kitten curiously.

"Be nice," Will said, putting the blanket on his shoulder, and then set her on it, patted her small, fragile back, listening to her soft little noises.

Hannibal put the rest of her food in a sealed container, in the fridge, and then brought over a tiny, furry blanket for Will to hold for her. "It will feel like her mother."

Will took it and let her lay over it instead, and she dug her tiny claws into it, rubbing her face on it. "Aw..."

She let out a little burp, then another one, and settled, snuggling into the side of Will's neck.

"You are her mother now, I believe," Hannibal said, sitting with Imago, petting him to keep him calm.

Will gave Hannibal a look, over the rim of his glasses. "You know, I brought her on board for you."

That won Will a look of genuine surprise from Hannibal, who raised his eyebrows, quizzically. "For me?"

"You're very much like a cat to me. Your habits, your attitude," Will explained, but let the kitten curl up with him, a natural with animals as it were.

Hannibal chuckled at that, and half-closed his eyes, looking feline even as he did that. "And you thought perhaps I may grow lonely on a ship full of dogs?"

"Over run," Will said, correcting Hannibal gently, and slid his barefoot over to touch his leg.

Hannibal smirked at that, and cupped his hand over Will's foot. "She's my birthday present?"

"Yes. I've been a terrible... boyfriend. I got drunk on your birthday and made you cake that tastes like booze and pineapples. She's yours."

Hannibal just gave a little smile at that, and looked at the kitten on Will's shoulder with soft eyes. "You have more than made up for it. May I ... hold her?"

Will smiled and gently moved her with her blanket and set her in Hannibal's hands, gently, she was small enough that she was engulfed in his bigger hands.

Hannibal looked down at his tiny, breathing present, and then put her on his shoulder where she curled up under his ear, breathing against the side of his neck. He smiled to himself, and covered her with her furry blanket, feeling her tiny body go heavier as she relaxed. "Thank you."

"She likes you," Will said, getting up and pressing his hand against Hannibal's other shoulder, and then leaned to kiss him, softly. "You're welcome."

Hannibal kissed back, gently, and looked at the tiny kitten, then at Will. "I'm curious, in what ways do I remind you of a cat?"

"You remind me more of an adult cat. The way you want to be groomed, ways you want to be 'petted'," Will rolled his eyes at that, "but it's in their classic, almost snooty demeanor. Not a bad thing."

Hannibal made a snooty cat face at that, without realizing it, then petted the kitten when she stirred, keeping one hand over her to keep her little body warm as she digested the food. "Thank you, I suppose. You find me aloof?"

Will kissed Hannibal's nose as he did that, and snuggled his face with his own, resting his forehead against his. "Sometimes. Even in killing, you are... regal."

Hannibal looked flattered by that, and turned his head to kiss Will's lips. "I do like to play with my food before I kill it," he mused, with a little smirk.

"Yes, you do. You toyed with me for years," Will whispered, against Hannibal's lips, much more himself today.

Hannibal smiled, and kissed Will. "And you toyed back, which is why I liked you," Hannibal purred. "One of the reasons, anyhow."

"Liked? You were infatuated, Doctor Lecter," Will said, righting himself and smoothing out his hand over his ruddy t-shirt.

Hannibal's eyes glittered at Will. "Obsessed."

"What will you do now that your 'obsession' is now in your... 'possession?" Will asked, head tilted, a smile whispering against his lips, and he took his glasses off.

"Precisely what I did before," Hannibal whispered against Will's lips, looking up at him. "Only a little closer."

Will sat down across Hannibal's thighs, not to disturb the kitten he was mothering, and kissed the handsome doctor soundly, one hand on his jaw, thumbing across his cheek. "Oh?"

"Yes, now, more than ever, I am obsessed with you," Hannibal whispered, honestly, leaning his handsome face against Will's palm with a deep sigh.

Will had always known, he had always wanted to give into that obsession he held right back, but he always knew it was wrong, or thought it was wrong...

Hannibal was killer, he ate people.

But then, that made Will a hypocrite.

He nuzzled Hannibal's face, setting his glasses down on the counter by them, and kissed him again, slowly.

Hannibal closed his eyes and kissed Will harder, their tongues meeting and brushing as they did, setting Hannibal's heart beating faster in his chest, warming his skin.

Will was careful where he touched, not to dislodge the kitten, but kept kissing his *boyfriend*, deeply, showing him how much he was adored and loved, even if it had taken Will years to get there.

Will knew how to reach inside Hannibal and get a reaction from him, every time. He was the only person capable of that, ever.

Hannibal kissed Will slowly and hotly, sucking his lower lip, one hand against Will's chest through his shirt.

"I thought about you so often when I sailed to come find you," Will said, between heated kisses, scratching his nails down Hannibal's neck. "Not all of them pure."

Hannibal arched his strong back with a sigh against Will's lips, treasuring the rut of Will's nails down his back. "Tell me, Will, what did you want with me?"

"I..." Will breathed slowly, sucking on Hannibal's lip for a moment, "wanted to fuck you for leaving me... for hurting me..."

Hannibal swallowed, and kissed Will hard, completely turned on by what he said. "Punish me? Take me?"

"Right over the kitchenette counter," Will whispered, roughly, against Hannibal's mouth, turning to straddle him, one hand against his groin, palming him.

"I think that would only be just," Hannibal panted back, already hard as a rock under Will's palm, hips rising to rub against his hand, slowly.

Will gently took the sleeping kitten and laid her on the small couch with Lucy, who snuggled her, to keep her warm, and then walked back toward Hannibal, standing in front of him. "It would be."

Hannibal stood, and kissed Will again, hotly, both hands cupping his face, fingers working their way into Will's hair. "Did you imagine I was bound?"

"Sometimes," Will said, honestly, winding his tongue against Hannibal's, even though he was larger than him, Will wasn't going to let the tables turn here. He was worked up, and Hannibal seemed to be in a mood to let him indulge.

"With what? Rope? My own tie?" Hannibal asked, raggedly, pulling Will into the kitchen, obviously hard and wanting under his slacks.

Will reached into a drawer for the zip ties he used for the sails sometimes, and held them up. "Hands behind your back," he said.

Hannibal obliged, with an eager sparkle in his eyes, wrists crossed behind the small of his back, breathing hard.

Will leaned into him, and tied Hannibal's hands up, zipping the tied closed, tightly. He carded a hand through his hair, and pushed him down to the ground, on his knees.

Hannibal let himself be pushed, and swallowed, a slow, devious. pleased smile on his perfect lips. "Were you angry?"

He wasn't, not in the moment, but channeling how he had felt back then, he could easily be swayed to be. "Do you want me to be?"

"I think it could be ... therapeutic," Hannibal said, looking up at Will with a steady gaze.

Will carded his hand through Hannibal's hair again, a distant sort of look in his eyes for a moment, and undid his own pants, letting his jeans fall around his thighs, and then to the floor, bare underneath. "Suck."

Arms pinned behind his back, Hannibal leaned in, and dragged his tongue over WIll's cock, then pulled it into his mouth, deftly, and started to suck, slowly. His dramatic cheekbones hollowed even more becomingly as he did, the shadows sharp under them as he took Will down.

Will was doing his best not to feel what Hannibal felt, but putting himself back all those years ago, in shambles, angry and depressed...

His hand squeezed in his hair, tugging harder as his thrust his hips into Hannibal's mouth.

Hannibal groaned at the tug and the push of Will's hips, and let him hit the back of his throat, then lathed his tongue around Will's cock as he moved back again, repeating the slow, hot action, letting Will fuck his greatest weapon.

Will stopped him, and pulled him to his feet and pressed him up against the counter, and undid his pants, letting them fall to the floor at Hannibal's feet, and then moved him out of them.

"Spread."

Hannibal's long, graceful body draped itself over the low counter easily. He looked up, at their reflection in the dark surface of the refrigerator, and saw Will behind him in the black mirror.

He spread his thighs, slowly, and looked back over his shoulder at Will, breathing hard.

Will was not going to be kind, he was not going to press his tongue into his lover and bring him close to coming. He grabbed the lube and pressed two fingers of it into Hannibal's warmth, groaning at how tight he was, sure that he was /hardly/ ever fucked.

Hannibal gasped, and the sound faded into a groan at the feeling of Will's fingers inside him. He had almost never been fucked, even when he wanted it. No one had the confidence to take

him, not like this.

"Will-" he groaned, and arched his firm ass up, against Will's probing fingers, blushing fiercely as his blood rushed all over his body.

He held Hannibal's tied hands with his free fist, and shoved his fingers in as far as he could, probing deeply, making him looser, and then pulled them out. He replaced them with his cock, hands on Hannibal's hips,driving up and into him to compensate for height.

Hannibal let out a sharp moan, then sighed, deeply, hissing a little at how /big/ Will felt inside him.

"Will," he repeated, cheek against the counter as he pressed back, whorishly eager to feel will move inside his body.

Will pushed him down into the counter, the snap of his hips causing Hannibal's to rapt against the sharp edge, over and over as he picked up speed, one hand wrapped around Hannibal's neck. "I dreamed of choking the life from you while I fucked you..." he whispered into his ear, leaning over him.

"Do it," Hannibal gasped, his head arching back as Will started to screw him into the counter, completely transported by the experience as he fought not to come right then and there.

Will wrapped his fingers around Hannibal's throat more, letting the rage and the anger, the despair he had felt take over, fingers digging deep into his throat, like he had wanted to do for months while locked in the mental institution. He fucked him hard, burying his cock deep into him, faster and harder, gasping like he couldn't quite control his own anger.

Hannibal felt his airway crushed under Will's hands, and a strangled moan left his mouth as Will hammered into him, hard and fast, forcing his body to shake as his thighs spread a little wider for more of it.

His lips worked around Will's name over and over as his face went dark, and he strained at the ties on his wrists as he felt himself start to come so hard that it was actually slightly terrifying.

Hannibal came against the counter, writhing and soundless, shaking and sweating before his head dropped, unconscious.

Will only needed to see that, to watch Hannibal struggle, to see that he /loved/ the violence, and then feel him throb around his cock. He started to come, and bit hard into Hannibal's shoulder, tasting the coppery liquid there as he sucked it roughly, and stop, hand lax around his throat, panting against Hannibal's back, sweaty.

Hannibal's back stayed still and flat for a moment, then rose as he gasped for breath while Will came inside him, and his hands splayed behind his back, in pleasure as he came back to consciousness and realized Will was filling him.

"Oh ...." he whispered.

Will panted, breathing harder than he ought to have been, and reached for a knife from the counter, cutting Hannibal's tied off, and then pulled out. He leaned against the wall, back to him, palm pressed into his eyes.

Hannibal put a hand against the counter, shaking, and straightened, turning to look at Will with shaking, weak knees. "Will?"

He didn't give into those urges often, and to have done so made him feel... thrilled, and high, and nauseated all at once. He could have easily killed Hannibal.

"M'fine."

Hannibal cleared his throat, and went to Will, touching his back with one hand before he wrapped an arm around him. "Will..."

Will turned his head into Hannibal's neck as the other man's arm wrapped around him, and he kissed the spot on his neck where his fingers left marks.

Hannibal sighed and hugged Will to him, snuggling him where they stood as he kissed the bruises. "You scared yourself."

"Frightened is more like it," he whispered, voice wavering. He swallowed, turning around to hug Hannibal properly.

Hannibal held Will more securely when he turned, as gentle now as they had been brutal a moment ago, and touched the back of Will's head, fingers in his hair. "What, precisely, frightened you? How much you enjoyed the power?"

"Yes," Will wavered, not meeting Hannibal's eyes, just burying his nose in his neck instead, one arm up and around his shoulders. "Like killing for the first time. Powerful and uplifting..."

Hannibal smiled a little at that, and kissed Will's temple, tasting the sweat near his dark curls.

"Just as I accepted, completely, your ability to kill, I accept your ability to delight in having power over me, sexually," Hannibal said. Will did a little more than tolerate, that much was certain. He'd lied, he'd lied horribly.

"I delight in a lot of things where you are concerned."

Hannibal smiled at Will's choice of words, and rested his lips against Will's dark hair, inhaling the smell of him. "Not tolerate?"

"No. I no longer tolerate." Will sighed heavily, and kissed Hannibal on the lips.

Hannibal closed his eyes, and kissed Will back, adoringly, his heart beating a slow, relieved rhythm as they kissed for a long moment, then parted to breathe. "Did you think you had killed me?"

"No." But it was wavering, sad almost. Will rested his head against Hannibal's. "I worry someday I won't stop."

Hannibal rested his face against Will's, and strangely enough, smiled at that, then gave his lips a gentle kiss. "You won't kill me, Will."

"No?" Will asked, shaking, but curled around Hannibal.

"No," Hannibal whispered back, and ran his fingertip over Will's lips. "If you were going to kill me, you would have done it by now. You are not an opportunistic creature, and you would never feel the incredible rush of power you felt when you killed Hobbs if you killed just to feel it," Hannibal said, knowingly. "You felt power when you killed him, and when you killed Randall Tier because you did what you felt you/must do. You have not killed me yet, you do not see me as an evil that must be flushed from the world."

"I haven't killed you because I love you," Will said, knowing that had always been the case, even when he hated him the most. Even when he wore his forgiveness on his sleeve, in a blade.

Hannibal closed his eyes at the admission, and kissed Will again, slowly, holding him close. Will was not good at being honest with himself, so to hear him say that, to admit it was heady and sweet. "That is precisely why I enjoyed feeling you fail."

Will was terrible about being honest with himself, though always brutally honest with other people when it was needed.

He huffed, more of a sigh than anything, resignation.

He felt better at least, finally getting that anger out of his system. For now.

"Did I hurt you?"

"A little," Hannibal said, softly, but not unpleased. "But I enjoyed it, to be perfectly honest."

Will chuckled at that, not surprised. "You'd want to do it again?"

"Of course," Hannibal said, even as the bruises on his neck darkened, showing just where Will's hands had been.

Will sighed through his nose, touching the spots gently. "I don't know..."

Hannibal arched his neck back, welcoming the touches with a sigh, enjoying the little tender touches. He adored any proof that Will loved him, brutal or gentle. "I don't require that we do it again, but I would be open to that."

Will hummed, and kissed the spots, openly adoring with Hannibal in ways he had not been with anyone. But, Hannibal *knew* him, inside and out, mentally and physically. "I didn't know you liked to be fucked..."

"It's a very rare occurrence," Hannibal admitted, and sighed at the little touches and kisses Will gave him, basking in it like a cat in the sun. "I like to be fucked by *you*."

Will sighed, and kissed Hannibal's jaw, an apology of sorts for the marks left. "I won't lie, I liked it."

Hannibal pulled Will to the small couch and laid down, then pulled Will over him, holding him as they curled up together. "I hoped you would. You have the capacity both to submit, and to dominate, I would hate to leave one part of you unsatisfied."

Will laughed, more of snort, and curled up with Hannibal. "Kind of you."

Hannibal laughed at Will, softly, and kissed him. "I am nothing, if not thoughtful."

Will tucked himself between the back of the couch and Hannibal, secure and safe feeling there, and just now undoing the buttons of Hannibal's shirt. "You always have been, even when you are cruel."

Hannibal curled one leg around Will's hips, and took his shirt off, slowly. "As have you," Hannibal said, as though in tribute.

Will let his own come off, over his head, and then pushed Hannibal's off his shoulders, and rested his cheek against his chest, one hand in his hair there, toying with it softly. "We are good at being thoughtfully cruel."

"We are very possibly the best in the world at being thoughtfully cruel," Hannibal whispered against Will's mouth.

Will breathed in deeply, and kissed Hannibal thoughtfully where he had been cruel not long before, he was now soft and gentle, caring even. "Unfortunately."

"It seems we will have to make an effort to use our abilities to enhance each other's lives, rather than disrupt them," he whispered, his eyes warm and soft.

It was something new to them, definitely, but Will had that ability, he just had to focus on it, and make it worth it. "Are you capable, Doctor?"

"I believe I am, now that we have our petty jealousies out of the way," Hannibal whispered.

For the most part, though Will knew things would still arise between them, as they always did, petty or not. Will wrapped around Hannibal a little tighter, gazing at him the way he never had anyone, shield and forts taken down, bare in every way to him. "Good."

Hannibal knew that too, he was acutely aware they could both be equally difficult, and equally jealous, especially recently. But they would find a way, because anything was better than being separated again. He touched Will's face with a sigh, and kissed him slowly, tipping WIll's head back with it as he pinned him against the back of the couch.

It was Hannibal's actions, like now, when he kissed Will like that, so thoroughly, so perfectly, like he was the only thing in the whole world. Will's hand rested on Hannibal's, one leg up

over his naked thigh, opening his mouth to him as they kissed.

Times like this, nothing really mattered beyond the two of them.

Hannibal kissed Will like it was the end of the world and he was never going to be able to kiss him again, pouring his heart and soul into it with one hand in his hair, lips locking and tongues brushing. Will locked his arm around Hannibal's shoulders, relishing in their time together, the moment that was just them, wrapped up in Hannibal's feelings, his needs and wants..

The moment was broken by a tiny 'meeew' from the blanket bed on the nearby chair. The little mew broke Will’s concentration and he huffed out a chuckle against Hannibal's mouth.

"She's probably hungry again," he whispered.

"So am I," Hannibal sighed, not meaning food in the least as he gazed at Will's beautiful eyes, then forced himself to stand, nude and aroused again. He padded to the kitchen with a sigh. "Duty calls."

Will swallowed, watching Hannibal with a predatory gaze, his own need aroused again easily. But, the kitten needed them first. He reached over to get her, and put her curled up against his shoulder with the blanket. "Poor thing."

Mischa snuggled into Will's warm shoulder with a little purr, and searched for milk on his skin with her tiny muzzle as Hannibal heated up some of the kitten food, carefully, and looked back at Will.

"This will be our lives for the next few weeks," Hannibal said, almost cheerfully.

"I don't mind if you don't mind," Will sighed, petting the kitten's little head with one finger, laughing at her little purr. "She's purring."

Hannibal smiled over his bare, bitten shoulder at Will, and funnelled some warmed kitten food into a new bottle, then tested the temperature, and brought the tiny thing to Will. "May I try this time?"

Will scooted over, both of them naked, and let Hannibal settle before he handed the little one over to him. "Sure."

Hannibal smiled a little as he took the delicate creature who sniffed at the air and mewed for food, able to *smell* it but not able to get at it. He laid her over his knee, and covered her with the blanket, then fed her the bottle like that, smiling when she took to it right away, almost pulling the bottle from his fingers. "Good girl..."

Will watched, loving the way Hannibal took such care, where he normally might be cruel with anyone else. He rested his chin on Hannibal's shoulder. "If all your victims could see you now..."

Hannibal laughed quietly and shook his head, holding the bottle carefully for the kitten as she drank with lusty hunger. "None of them deserve to, that is why they are my victims."

Will bit Hannibal's shoulder playfully, and then kissed it. "I suppose that's true."

Even Abigail, he knew, wasn't someone who deserved to see this. He petted the top of the kitten's round, fuzzy head, then her back as she drank, and tipped the bottle a little more so that she could get it all out. Will grinned into Hannibal's shoulder and pet the kitten with one finger, too, like watching a child that was their own.

"She'll fit right in."

"Charming and armed?" Hannibal asked with a soft, fond smile, starting to see why Will considered him feline at his core.

"Something like that," Will drawled, stifling a yawn into Hannibal's skin, and then got up to go make some coffee.

Hannibal watched, distracted by Will's bare form as he walked to the kitchen. "Perhaps we should make a mutual decision not to wear clothes in the boat," he teased, admiring Will's figure, then set the now empty bottle aside and put Mischa on a little face cloth on his shoulder, and patted her back.

Will moved his eyes over his shoulder to Hannibal, all too aware of the other man's eyes on him, though Will didn't see much to look at, he didn't not hate that Hannibal lusted after him. He poured grounds into the filter and turned the maker on. "We need to get some better curtains then..."

"Our neighbors are, so far, seagulls," Hannibal said as he helped the kitten burp, then spread her furry blanket on the ground and set her on it, laying on the blanket on his side as he watched her explore.

"Now and then the dock manager walks by," Will said, looking out the small window, though no one was around.

"I'll procure some curtains, in that case," Hannibal said, and wiggled his long, graceful fingers for the kitten, which she tried to pounce at.

Will rolled his eyes and his cell phone went off across the room. He walked over to find it in his jeans, and pulled it out. "They found him."

"The dragon?" Hannibal asked without looking up, letting the tiny kitten wrestle two of his fingers and bite at them, encouraging her with wiggles.

"Yeah."

Jack also sent a message, and Will sighed, sure he'd gotten away from that, but one Jack was just the same it seemed as all the others. Hannibal looked up at Will, eyebrow raised.

"He knows who you are, I doubt he will be fond."

Will texted both men back, and then looked up and over at Hannibal, brow raised. "Not here to make friends, Hannibal."

"I would not trust him alone in a room with you, Will," Hannibal said, and let the kitten crawl over his arm like a jungle gym.

"Steve would be there," Will said, reading off the texts he was getting back. "He's going to talk to 'Francis' about it first." He rolled his eyes.

Hannibal just sighed, still not certain he thought it was a good idea, and rubbed the kitten's stomach with one finger, wrestling her gently. "Hm."

"You can come with me," Will offered, sure that it wouldn't matter a great deal if Hannibal were there with him.

Hannibal let out a small sigh of relief, and nodded his agreement. "Then we will have to go soon, or someone will need us back here in under two hours, for a feeding," he said, watching as the kitten started to run around her blanket.

"I'm waiting for the okay. Might not be today," Will shrugged, and poured himself a cup of coffee, and then one for Hannibal.

Sure enough, Steve texted back saying that it was fine for Will to head over, but to prepare for the meeting to be short.

"Short meeting," he said, and started to get dressed again, jeans and a button up this time, an attempt to look less frumpy.

Hannibal nodded, and let Mischa crawl on her blanket as he got ready as well, as professional-looking as he could manage with some clothes he bought for his birthday yesterday, prepared in case Will wanted to take him out for dinner. "Just as well."

"If we're not too long, we'll get something to eat on the way back," Will said, since neither of them had really had time to prepare anything yet today.

He did up his buttons, hot enough out not to need a jacket, and then tied up his boots.

Lucy laid on the blanket, and watched the kitten, who crawled toward her with a yawn, and laid against her side.

Lucy wagged, watching Mischa.

"I think she will be fine for a short while, she has her nanny," Hannibal said, petting Lucy.

Will just watched the dog with the kitten, and knew she would be okay so long as Imago didn't try to play with the cat. "Maybe we should bring Imago with us."

"The Dragon has a history of maiming and killing dogs," Hannibal said with a sigh, and picked up the kitten, gesturing for Lucy to follow as he picked up the blanket too, and took them into the small bathroom, making a little nest on the floor there.

Lucy understood and laid down again, wagging, and Hannibal put the kitten against her, and closed the door.

"There."

"True."

Will sighed, hands in his pockets, and shifting his weight, and then leaned to pet Winston.

Hannibal listened at the door for a moment, and nodded, then grabbed a light suit jacket from the closet, another recent purchase, but still wore no tie.

He wrapped an arm around Will's waist, looking at him. "Jack cannot go, himself?"

Jack probably could. Hell, there were three other Wills in this world that probably could. The issue here was not Jack or the others, it was Will himself.

His responsibilities to the case and see it through. He wanted a good look at the guy he'd gotten so far inside of that he almost drowned.

He wanted answers, he wanted reasoning.

Even if he knew he probably wouldn't get them.

"Can we just go?" He'd texted for a cab, it was waiting out by the dock.

Hannibal nodded with a sigh, and let Will go, slipping something small into his pocket as they passed the kitchen on their way out.

Will locked up the boat, and slid the keys into his pocket, and walked to the awaiting cab, giving the man the location they needed, which earned Will and Hannibal a look, but then a nod.

Will got in, and settled.

Hannibal sat next to Will, and slipped his hand into Will's where they sat.

As before, Hannibal feared he understood the darkness and madness of the dragon better than Will did. The brave, smaller man wasn't going to let that stop him, however.

Will canted his head over at Hannibal as the car started to move away from the dock, to the streets. He squeezed his hand.

"I can hear the cogs cranking away in your head, Hannibal," he said, quietly. "You're worried."

Hannibal sighed through his long, straight nose and looked over at Will. "There is a difference between empathizing with him and understanding him," Hannibal said, softly. "I fear that you do the first, beautifully, but only I do the latter, and I am nearly certain he will make an attempt on your life."

Will shifted, swallowing down the knot in his throat. This was why he was bringing Hannibal at all. "He'd risk his freedom to have Reba with him if he did."

"To the Dragon, it could be worth that risk," Hannibal said.

"His last kill was unsuccessful in bringing about his transformation."

Will stared at Hannibal, not sure he liked that he thought Will would be the dragon's last victim to finish off what needed to be done.

"I'm not the family he needs."

"No, you aren't, but he knows who you are, and he knows what you do. The Dragon may attack you to get you out of his way, and Francis may attack you for getting closer to the Dragon than he likes, for pulling him into your mind," Hannibal explained as they rode through the city.

"He doesn't know I've done that," Will murmured darkly, eyes on the road ahead of them as they made their way over a bridge into a much dingier part of town.

"You have, thanks to Miss Lounds, a reputation for replicating the pathologies of the minds of the killers you study. Some, such as myself, may find that a relief. Some, such as Francis, may see that as threatening to his own uniqueness."

"Freddie," he sighed, and the cab pulled up to the hospital, and Will got out, paying the cabbie in cash, and then waited for Hannibal.

Hannibal stepped out, smoothly and followed Will, with one hand against the small of his back as they climbed the steps and knocked on the door.

Steve answered, looming over them both.

"Hi, thanks for coming. Dr. Du Maurier is just touring the house at the moment."

The main hospital was large, but the houses they had for patients like Dolarhyde were quaint, but spacious.

Will looked up at Steve, blinking, but like a small dog, stood his ground, feeling himself bristle at the mention of the name. "Bedelia is here?"

"Yes," a smooth, female voice said from behind Steve, "she is."

Steve stepped aside, revealing Bedelia standing there, looking at Will with some disdain.

Will's hand shot back to catch Hannibal's wrist, fingers sliding down his pulse and then palm, long digits sliding together. He was visibly tense, every muscle in his body on edge.

"Not surprising you'd place yourself in position of power over the weaker and more criminal minded."

Hannibal said nothing, just watched his former 'wife' and the man he loved interact.

Bedelia's blue eyes narrowed at Will, and she smirked. “Good to see you.”

You could strangle her. Kill her now, get her out of the way...

Will's gaze had gone far beyond Bedelia for a moment, beyond Steve behind her, his fists curled tight, one around Hannibal's hand. Hannibal gave Will's hand a reassuring squeeze, and rubbed his thumb over the side of his wrist, as though to calm the spitting mongoose.

Bedelia looked at Will with a imperious smile.

"Don’t be like Frederick, Bedelia. His fame for those he wrote about only went so far for so long. Your star will sizzle out soon, don't try to find another to hitch to with me," he all but snarled at her as he walked by, and looked at Steve imploringly, as if to have him lead the way.

Steve just raised his eyebrows at that, but led Will toward the back of the house, to the kitchen where he knocked on the wall to let Dolarhyde know they were here.

"Mr. Graham is here."

Francis Dolarhyde was taller than Will thought, as the man walked out, alone, Reba was busy making what smelled to be lunch for the couple. The height didn't make Will back down, and the other man gestured to the living.

"Please," he offered, a slight lisp to his words, and Will went, walking after Dolarhyde, and so far it seemed to be going well.

As well as it could be.

"Jack Crawford of the Gotham PD asked me to come by and get an official reporter--"

But Dolarhyde was looking past Will at Hannibal, wide eyed."Doctor Lecter."

Hannibal nodded his head at Dolarhyde, politely. "Mr. Dolarhyde, so good to meet you," he said.

Will stood deftly between them, like a wolf trying to keep an estranged animal away from his pack.

"I had hoped you would would make contact sooner," Dolarhyde said, a sense of admiration and pride in the man, and then reached to grasped Will by the throat. Hannibal moved, very quickly, and snapped the fingers back that had touched WIll's throat, dislocating them the way only someone who really understood those joints /could/.

He pushed Will back, toward the door, and stared at Francis's eyes. Dolarhyde growled in pain, almost a howl, and Will gasped in the corner, just behind Hannibal, glaring from Hannibal to the other man, once again being tossed aside like he could do nothing for himself.

"He is in the way," Francis said, looking at Hannibal. "I thought you would understand. That you would... help me become..."

Francis held his hand with the dislocated fingers, but didn't seem to notice or /mind/.

Reba turned from the counter, alarmed, even if she couldn't see anything.

"D?" she asked, reaching out.

"D, what's going on?"

Steve was at the door in a second, ready to intervene, but Hannibal seemed to have it under control.

"I do understand, Francis," Hannibal said, calmly.

"I understand what you must do to achieve your full magnificence, but I object to Mr. Graham being killed for it, just as you might object to Miss McClane being hurt for the same reason."

"Reba..." he sighed, like he was coming back to this senses, and Will glared at Dolarhyde, and then Hannibal in turns.

"You can tell the police I did it, I killed those people," Francis said, looking at Will. "But don't come back or I will finish you."

Francis looked at Hannibal. "You can come back."

"Thank you," Hannibal nodded, and looked at Will, noting the marks on his neck where Dolarhyde's now dislocated fingers had pressed.

"I would seek medical attention for your hand," Hannibal said, as Reba made her way to Francis, touching his arm.

"What happened to your hand?" she asked.

"It's nothing," he said, keeping it from her, knowing he'd get one of the doctors here to look at it, but he could probably pop them back into place himself.

The marks on Will's neck were almost claw like, and he was ignoring the way his airway felt bruised from it, too wrapped in his own head, trying to distinguish his own thoughts from the other's in his head.

He put his glasses on, trying to create a barrier, feeling the Dragon's anger in the air around him, making that empathy so much harder to ignore.

"I think it's time we go," Hannibal said, softly, his arm around Will's shoulders, still aware of Francis, still ready to break any part of him that touched Will.

Francis' jaw shifted and he looked at Reba, and snapped his fingers back with a howl of pain.

"Be sure to come back, Doctor Lecter. I'd like to talk."

Will threw a glare over his shoulder at the other man as Hannibal lead him out, past Bedelia who was over seeing the whole thing.

Reba winced at the sound, and put her arm around Francis's back, confused and concerned by the events.

Hannibal got Will outside, and closed the door behind them, then looked at his neck close-up with a sigh.

"I'd like to get you home and treat this to prevent swelling from occluding your windpipe," he sighed.

Will swallowed, roughly, as Hannibal looked at his neck, the cab waiting for them as if someone had asked them to stay, and it hadn't been them.

"He should be jail," Will hissed.

"Agreed," Hannibal said, and tilted his head at the cab, curiously.

"He is a violent, dangerous man, but I have the feeling that his security here is more vigilant than that in the prison itself," Hannibal said, noting a red-haired figure on the top of one of the buildings, speaking into an earpiece.

Will felt them being watched, he could almost /sense/ them, and closed his eyes, but didn't look. Opening them again, he walked to the cab, still furious.

"I can't think Jack would allow this."

"I am certain he does not approve," Hannibal said, and opened the door for Will, holding it, still looking at his neck, concerned that he was going to have a narrowed airway once the swelling set in.

He asked the cabbie to take them back to the docks when he sat next to Will.

Will got out his phone and sent Jack a text, that there was a confession, but that was all he could get out of him. He placed the phone back into his pocket, and rested his elbow against the door, looking out the window as they started back to the docks.

Hannibal was quiet as they rode, resisting the impulse to tell Will he had warned him, and was right to do so. He was sure Will felt that acutely enough.

"Can you swallow without pain?"

He couldn't, not really. Dolarhyde had a very, very strong grip that Will had not really anticipated.

"It's fine," he whispered, able to feel the way Hannibal wanted to tell him he told him so, and Will was glad he hadn't.

Hannibal slipped his hand around Will's and held it, quietly.

"I assure you, his hand hurts more than your neck," he whispered, somewhat consolingly.

"You're not going back there to talk to him are you?" Will asked, bristling at the thought, and if he were an animal, his hair would have stood on end, hackles raised.

Hannibal actually petted his hand over the back of Will's neck, like he was smoothing down actual hackles.

"Not if you strongly object."

Hardly what he wanted to hear.

"You find him interesting, don't you?"

"I find him interesting, on a clinical level," Hannibal said, plainly, and looked at Will, able to see the jealousy brewing in him.

Will nodded, not sure he entirely believed Hannibal, but wasn't in the mood to call him out on it and start a fight. His swallowed, throat clicking around the crush of his windpipes.

"Okay."

The cab finally stopped at the docks, and Hannibal paid the driver this time. He never seemed to run out of cash, somehow.

"Let's go inside," Hannibal murmured, and offered to help Will out.

Will nodded, and let Hannibal take his hand to help him out of the cab, not even asking about the money, he didn't care right now.

"Record time," he murmured.

Hannibal knew Will's throat was likely swelling inside, and reducing the amount of air he could get into his lungs, minute by minute.

He helped Will out, gracefully, and kept an arm around him as they walked to the boat.

"For which I am grateful," he said, and all but carried Will aboard.

Every swallow was starting to feel worse,, and Will wondered if it was this horrible for Hannibal after he attempted to choke him earlier. That said, he was sure he hadn't tried nearly as hard as Dolarhyde had.

HE pulled the keys out and unlocked the boat, slipping inside with Hannibal.

Will hadn't choked Hannibal anywhere near as hard as Dolarhyde choked Will. Will was flirting with the idea of murder, Francis was trying to crush Will's windpipe into his spine.

"Come, lay in bed, loosen your shirt around the neck," Hannibal advised as he opened the bathroom to check on Lucy and Mischa, and went to the freezer.

Will took his glasses off and left on the counter as he shuffled to the bed, undoing the buttons of his shirt four down, and laid down.

Hannibal came back with a bag of ice from the freezer, and packed it around Will's throat, then rummaged under the sink and gave Will three pills with a glass of cold water.

"Here, take these while you can swallow."

He was going to question that, but took them anyway, without question, drinking down as much as he could without choking on it.

"You're dying to say 'I told you so'."

"I am certain that you have felt that acutely enough, you do not need to hear it," Hannibal said, and laid Mischa in her blanket next to Will in bed, on the pillow.

"But I am very glad I insisted on coming with you."

"I think I asked you to," Will murmured, laying back to let the ice pack around his neck, cold, but not unwelcomed. He pet the little kitten with one finger, listening to her purr intently.

Mischa curled up in Will's hair, right next to his ear, and breathed against it as she slept.

"You seemed reluctant to accept that it was a necessity."

"I'm tired of being under estimated."

Will had never really had an upper hand. Hannibal always over powered him, always got to him first, and the only one he really got the upper on was Tier.

"I am not under-estimating you," Hannibal said, looking at Will as he sat on the bed.

"I never have."

"You... don't think I can handle myself."

Clearly, Hannibal was right, but Will hadn't a chance to fight back either before Hannibal had stepped in, doing what most people wouldn't have thought to do.

"I know that if you did defend yourself from Dolarhyde, it would turn deadly, and he would never be given the chance to recover."

"And I'd be forced to stay there," he whispered, throat rough sounding now, tilting his head back a bit to get more ice on it as he look up at Hannibal.

"You would," Hannibal said, softly, showing the side he only ever showed to Will, and adjusted the ice as it melted.

"Considering we just remidied my own incarceration, I am in no rush to see you behind glass."

"Been there, done that, despite what Bedelia would like to see," He rasped out, stretching out his neck as it grew uncomfortable.

"Bedelia is, and always has been very jealous of you," Hannibal said, softly, smiling a little at Will.

"Because she was there with you, but still did not know you," he said quietly, taking a deep breath. Bedelia was smart, she could see things from a certain stand point, she could try to manipulate, but in the end she was not Will, she did not have his empathy.

"There is no one on Earth, including Bedelia, who could ever understand me as you understand me," Hannibal said with a little smile.

"I spoke of you, often, in therapy. I believe she knew I loved you before I did."

Will rolled his eyes at that, petting the little kitten near his ear with one finger.

"She... came to see me when I was, uh, locked up. She was very taunting, and not very helpful."

"That is precisely her style," Hannibal said, and laid down next to Will, with Imago on the end of the bed, on Will's feet.

"She also likely resented the frequency with which I spoke of you in Florence."

"Why did you take her?" he asked, always curious was Hannibal took a companion when it could have so been much easier not to deal with another soul.

"I used her house as a refuge, thinking it was empty. I cleaned the blood from my skin, and walked into the bedroom to find her there with a gun aimed at me," Hannibal said, with a chuckle.

Will wasn't as amused as Hannibal obviously had been or was with that situation. Hannibal left his own house, left Will there to bleed out, to Bedelia's, where she held him at gun point and made him take her with him.

He didn't kill her, he didn't try, and he could have, honestly.

"The princess got her way."

"She was useful," Hannibal said with a sigh.

"Travelling as man and wife raised much less suspicion than a man travelling alone, the authorities were looking for a single fugitive."

"I'm sure she was."

Will no fool there; he knew Hannibal didn't just use Bedelia as a tool, he used her in other ways, despite if he missed Will or not.

Bitter? Yeah, he still very much was.

He used her to try to reassure himself that he had cut Will from his life, forever, that he could move on, start over ...

It had failed, miserably, and failure was the one thing Hannibal Lecter was not skilled in. He touched Will's face.

"And spite, I will admit that much. I was very angry."

All the choices that came from that day, that /night/ turned out to be the worst decisions any of them had ever made. A path set in motion that lead them here, now, but not without remorse.

"Oh. I know you were. I have the scars to prove it."

Hannibal sighed, and laid his hand over Will's stomach, over the smile he carved into him.

"I suppose she is my equivalent to your Molly Foster."

"Spite will make you do stupid things," he said, quietly, able to feel the ice starting to work, and the pills he'd swallowed.

Hannibal had given Will a strong anti-inflammatory, a muscle relaxer and a pain killer, and he was relieved to see their effects kick in.

"It certainly does," Hannibal agreed.

"Are you in pain?"

His eyes were a little droopy, obviously drugged and high on whatever he was given, and he'd taken them with the utmost trust.

"Not as much. It's... getting better."

Hannibal stroked his fingers through Will's curls, and smiled at the kitten nestled in his hair on his other side.

"She's very attached to you," Hannibal smiled.

"Snuggling you like a mother."

"Not a mother," he muttered, swallowing audibly, chin canted up, and then shifted his gaze to the side to look at the baby by his head while nestling his head into Hannibal's hand.

"A father, then," Hannibal said, and rubbed Will's scalp for him, to relax him.

"Baby animals are so rarely affectionate with their fathers, but you are an exception."

"Suppose I should be a father to something, couldn't manage being a real one," he said, with a sad sigh, but continue to let the small animal at his head.

"You will be, soon enough," Hannibal promised Will, and touched his cheek, fascinated with what Will fixated on when he was drugged.

"Would you prefer a boy or a girl?"

"Girl."

He gazed up at Hannibal, eyes a little glazed, pupils wide, making his eyes seem darker.

"Me too," Hannibal nodded, keeping himself in Will's field of vision, his storm-gray shirt contrasting with his tawny hair and skin.

"The best of both of us."

Will felt foggy and lithe, heavy in the limbs, and he started to realize that he had been given more than just some tylenol.

"You..." he hummed.

"I what?" Hannibal asked, watching Buster jump on the bed to sniff at Will, then curl up next to his side and laid his head on Will's chest.

Will, of course, got distracted by buster and put his hand on the dog, petting him.

"So protective."

"Yes, he is. Had we brought him with us, I think the dragon would have been slain," Hannibal said, and helped pet the feisty little dog.

"What is a dragon compared to a shark?"

Will snorted, a little lazy eye roll toward Hannibal, but he was smiling.

"He probably would have."

Buster sighed and settled on Will's chest to sleep on him, grunting as he started to snore.

The ice melted around Will's throat, leaving something else hard floating in the cool water in the plastic bag.

Will moved, trying to readjust the ice, though it was melted now, and he wondered how long he'd been laying here, feeling drugged and in a stupor...

His fingers grasped something hard, though not ice and he picked it up from his neck to look at it.

"Ah," Hannibal said as he sat up. He took the bag and opened it then pulled out five rather large, hard, wet rocks that were strangely see-through.

"Diamonds," he said, casually, and took the bag of water away to get more ice from the freezer.

"Diamonds?" he asked, brows furrowed as he tried to watch Hannibal, but with the dog on him and the kitten at his head, it was difficult to keep his eyes on the doctor.

"Why are we hiding diamonds in the ice?"

"I could not take my bank account with me," Hannibal explained as he brought the new bag back and picked up the large, rough cut diamonds.

"But I could stock the boat with what we required for a new life. Diamonds, gold, even platinum."

"Barney."

Will was amused by this, if nothing else right now, and maybe later he'd feel weird about it, but not in that moment, not with his head full haze.

"Barney helped, and was compensated accordingly," Hannibal said as he packed ice around Will's throat.

"Never throw away our bed mattress, or the couch cushions."

"Why would I do that anyway?" Will asked, acutely aware now that he was laying on likely millions of dollars.

"I don't think you're about to redecorate on a whim, but just in case," Hannibal said, then set the diamonds on the side table, and leaned down to kiss Will.

"We have all the money we need."

"Is this... your way of telling me not to go to work for the Gotham Police Department, Doctor?" he asked, voice lazy and, drawling out his words.

Hannibal nodded, and leaned down to kiss Will's cheek.

"It is, indeed. Stay on board, fish, enjoy yourself."

Will licked the inside of his teeth, lost in the sensation for a moment as he gazed up at Hannibal, wanting to say something, but honestly, wasn't this the life he wanted? Life away from Jack Crawford, life away from those things that tormented him? Fishing. Boating.

Hannibal.

They could be fine without him. If they really needed him, they could call.

"Okay..."

Hannibal leaned closer and kissed Will's cheek.

"There is nothing you need to do, unless it interests you," Hannibal assured him.

"I'm sure you have other talents to develop besides imagining yourself as this murderer or that?"

"I can be... selfish," Will breathed, turning his head to kiss Hannibal, enough not to dislodge the kitten at his head. "For once."

Even when he married Molly he hadn't been selfish, he had been giving, of himself.

Hannibal kissed Will's lips deeply, knowing that the sensation would be different when he was drugged, and his mind was open to new things.

"I would love to help you be selfish for the rest of your life."

Will's eyes rolled back into his head at the kiss, feeling perfectly smothered by it, one arm hitched around Hannibal's shoulders.

"I don't know how to be."

"What would fill you with purpose and joy when you wake up every morning? You would never be happy idle, your sense of duty would not allow it. Who needs your duty more than Jack Crawford?"

Hannibal asked, against Will's sensitive lips.

"My dogs, other dogs..." he said, without thinking about it, and his hazy eyes flitting to Hannibal's up close like this, tugging him down to sit by his free side, instead of looming over him.

"Imagine living on a large piece of land, large enough to hold many dogs who deserve love and attention, and safety. You could take care of them all, and find them homes as you see fit," Hannibal said, looking down at Will as he sat next to him.

"That could be your life."

"And what about you?"

Will knew what it would be that would make himself happy, even if he never had done it, because he was selfless. But he would hate to see Hannibal live a life he was not fond of.

"I could adapt my medical studies just a little, and become a veterinarian," he reasoned with a little chuckle.

"It would be an interesting endeavour. I would be working with you, and I could still enjoy the finer things."

Will let out a chuckle at that, and Buster moved off to go find the puppy to snuggle, and Will pulled Hannibal to his side.

"You want to take care of animals with me..."

"I want to be the one you can depend on to keep your surrogate sons and daughters happy and healthy," Hannibal said, sincerely.

"Not to mention it would be an intriguing medical exercise to expand my expertise to all creatures, not merely humans."

"S'long as you don't eat them, too," Will said, with another chuckle, and a nice, glowing flush to his cheeks that suggested he was content and happy with this idea.

"I am less inclined to eat dogs and cats than other species," Hannibal smirked, and kissed Will's jaw.

"I can imagine you happy like that."

"And you will be happy being a vet?" Will asked, needing to be reassured that Hannibal would be content like that, and not picking at the minds of humans.

"Yes," Hannibal nodded, and brushed Will's curls back, from his face.

"After I had you as a patient, I had to admit that no other mind could ever hold the same interest for me. It made psychiatry quite dull."

"I'll... I'll be your patient forever then, won't I?" he said, amused, his tongue listless and rolling with just about anything, a little more loosely.

"Does that distress you?" Hannibal asked Will, softly.

"No. Not if it's just me."

He admittedly didn't want Hannibal near Dolarhyde; not now, not later. Never. It was dangerous, and he worried that Hannibal would become enthralled with someone like that.

Hannibal understood completely.

"You are afraid I will attempt to treat Francis?"

"I'm afraid you will do something that will be regrettable for the both of us," Will explained.

Hannibal resisted the urge to say 'like get married?', and rubbed Will's chest with one hand.

"You think he will form an attachment."

"I think he wants you to mentor him. He's been trying to get your attention for quite sometime," Will said, little more sober as his mind drifted back to the Dragon.

Hannibal sighed, unable to disagree.

"I think the Dragon longs for understanding, the same way I longed for your understanding," Hannibal said.

"A predator is usually a lonely beast."

"He knows you would understand, and find him fascinating. My level understanding isn't what he wants," Will explained, looking over at Hannibal.

"He does not merely want to be understood, he wants to /impress/ with his 'magnificence'. What good is becoming a dragon without an audience?" Hannibal mused.

Will leveled Hannibal with a dark gaze, not amused, and his drugged stupor was turning in on him.

"Even more reason not to entertain him."

"I have no intention of entertaining him," Hannibal reassured Will, and kissed his lips.

"There is no need to worry."

Will grasped his hand into Hannibal's shirt, gazing at him up close and kissed him hard.

Hannibal kissed Will back, deeply as big drops of rain began to beat against the side of the boat in a downpour.

"Hmm," he hummed, against Will's lips, devouring the jealousy off of them.

It got muggy out, the rain and clouds creating a wetness in the air that left Will's chest feeling heavy, even as he kissed Hannibal, like he was trying to make him understand how desperately he needed him.

Hannibal half-laid over Will, reassuring him that he wasn't going anywhere, and kissed him more deeply, pressing Will's head into the pillow beneath it as their tongues swept each other's mouths and wrapped together.

Hannibal knew how to draw him right into another subject, away from the ones that left him feeling depressed and anxious, and right into the folds of passion. His body was languid with drugs, reacting to Hannibal's weight over him, tongue against his heavily.

The rain began to pound against the small, round windows, and created a soothing sound as the boat rocked.

"I adore you," he whispered, sincerely.

Will knew, and the urge to ask Hannibal to promise that was strong, but he resisted, and kissed him instead, hands on either side of Hannibal's face.

"Don't go see Dolarhyde."

"I will not see him," Hannibal replied, gazing at Will intimately, then kissed him again, slowly and softly, sucking Will's lower lip.

It seemed to be enough to satiate Will for now, and he gave him to the feeling of Hannibal's distractions, fingers tugging through his growing hair, and sealing Hannibal's promise with a deeper kiss.

Hannibal kissed Will sweetly and deeply, not pushing for more in his state, no matter how much he would love to give him a sensory experience on the pills he was on.

"Can you sleep? Listen to the rain," Hannibal whispered as Mischa snuggled closer, purring.

Hannibal was always like that; never one to take advantage, and never had with Will, not with sex. It was oddly gentle where the knew the man to be cruel with shared past, and then some.

Letting out a sigh, he let his grip loosen, and tugged Hannibal instead to rest with him.

Hannibal laid next to Will on the side unoccupied by animals, and wrapped his arm around him.

"Let the motion of the boat rock you to sleep."

"One of these days, you'll lull me off to sleep, and I won't wake up," he said, darkly, eyes closed, listening to the purr next to his ear, and the roll of thunder in the distance.

Hannibal felt a pang of pain in his chest as he realized that was likely true, even just from old age someday.

"Shh," he whispered, and laid his hand over Will's heart.

The comment was purely something Will would think, the person he was, the luck he's had...

Instead, he let Hannibal's hand weigh on his chest, like an anchor in his stream, and drifted off.

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